



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
August 28 – September 4, 2015

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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Inuit language conference wraps in Iqaluit

Task force recommends exploring roman orthography rather than syllabics

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 27, 2015 6:46 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 27, 2015 10:31 AM CT



The delegates at the two-day conference, organized by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, came from across Canada, Greenland, and Alaska. (Pauline Pemik/CBC)

A task force launched by [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the national Inuit group](#), has recommended exploring roman orthography — and not Inuit syllabics — as a standard Inuit language writing system.

The recommendations from the Autausiq Inuktut Titirauisq task force come [following a major two-day summit on Inuit languages](#), which wrapped up Wednesday in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

Delegates from across the four Inuit regions of Canada, as well as representatives from Greenland, and Alaska, attended the summit, which discussed findings from a series of consultations after visits to all of Canada's Inuit regions.

Though the group recommended Inuit explore the idea of standardizing their writing system using roman orthography, it also emphasized the process will take time and cannot be rushed.



Juusipi Padlayat of Salluit, Que., said he '[didn't] think there is any problem' with standardizing the Inuktitut writing system into roman orthography. (Madeline Allakariallak/CBC)

There are some 60,000 Inuit in Canada, 63 per cent of whom speak their language.

Both the oral and written language varies among regions, with ITK researchers estimating there are 12 distinct dialects.

But the key difference in the written language is, while Inuit in Labrador and the western Arctic use roman orthography (the alphabet English language users are used to), Inuit in Nunavut and northern Quebec rely instead on syllabics – distinct characters originally imported by missionaries who had developed them for the Cree.

Though long discussed as a way to broaden use of the language and make learning it, and using it online, easier, a move away from syllabics was once too controversial for public discussion.

Now, as Inuit work towards strengthening their education system, and ties to one another, the idea is becoming more accepted.



A street sign in Iqaluit includes Inuit syllabics. ((CBC))

"I don't think there is any problem with that, if the majority wants to choose that," said Juusipi Padlayat, a delegate from Salluit, Nunavik. "Roman orthography, we don't have a problem with that, we only use this in Nunavik. Even if we are going to retain the use of syllabics, I think we can live with both."

Padlayat added that the final decision regarding language standardization has to be made by the people who are most affected.

Though the group's recommendations will be passed on to the National Committee on Inuit Education and submitted to delegates at Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, they are not binding. It will be up to local land claim organizations, language authorities, and governments to decide how to proceed further.

[It was announced in March](#) that the Nunavut government was looking into standardizing the writing system for Inuktitut in the territory's schools using Roman orthography.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-language-conference-wraps-in-igaluit-1.3205420>

Keep Living the Stories: 'Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection' Celebrates Being Aboriginal

by [James Leask](#) August 28, 2015 11:00 AM



"Northern Crow," by Stephen Gladue (detail)

In 2014, Toronto publisher Alternate History Comics launched a Kickstarter for an anthology of indigenous comics, with the goal of "showcasing the rich heritage and identity of indigenous storytelling." The resulting anthology, *Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection, Volume 1*, is now available, and it presents a unique and much needed look into aboriginal storytelling in multiple aspects.

It's easy, as an indigenous person, to slip into what sounds like hyperbole when discussing a project like this. *This is one of the most important comics of the year!* But it's easy for the same reasons that make it hard for any statement to actually *be* that

hyperbolic; the blunt reality of comics as a business and popular medium is that there really aren't that many aboriginal stories being told, and what few aboriginal characters there are usually employ crude stereotypes. These stereotypes aren't continued out of any real sense of hatred, but out of the almost complete lack of aboriginal people involved in the telling of these stories.

This is the most easily apparent area of *Moonshot*'s importance: the fact that these are all comics featuring aboriginal characters in stories by aboriginal creators. It seems like such a little thing, but it trickles through in every moment reading the book. And more than that, they're stories told by so many different aboriginal peoples!

As the book's editor [Hope Nicholson](#) says in her foreword; "There is no single, homogeneous native identity." That seems like an obvious statement, but it's seldom actually implemented in comics. Aboriginal superheroes often seem to be invariably Cheyenne or Cherokee, which can give the impression that they're the only two peoples that writers know. The specific representation usually falls into a glib pan-aboriginalism of tipis, reservations and invocations of "our people."



From "Tlicho Nàowo." Art by Nicholas Burns

In contrast, *Moonshot* openly celebrates how many different aboriginal peoples are represented in the book. Cree! Caddo! Anishinabeg! S'Klallam! Métis! Inuit! Tlicho! It feels silly to enthusiastically name them, but they *deserve* to be named, and they so rarely are. If nothing else, *Moonshot* is a book that, as a basic level, gives voice to the under-spoken truth that, while many aboriginal people in North America are connected by

traditions, stories and migrations, the idea of a single “aboriginal” identity is a misguided creation by a colonial system that was never meant to serve those it categorized.

The only pan-aboriginalism worth celebrating is one of many voices, and this book contains more of them than is usually seen in one place. That feels like a revolutionary act in a medium and culture that rarely appreciates this integral distinction.

Similarly, a common criticism of the anthology format is that of inconsistency in art, where multiple styles are forced to coexist whether they do so naturally or not. Truthfully, there are stories here that are less polished than they could be, and there are aesthetics that clash. Any anthology will be a mixed bag in this regard, and the lettering is often in need of a polish. However, the book’s celebration of aboriginal voices helps smooth rough edges.

What does an aboriginal person look like? In most comics, it’s a broad nose, brown skin, warpaint, leather, and breeches. But in a book where there are so many different artists, this narrow idea is widened, as even otherwise recognizable features and patterns are presented differently.

Compared to the writers, few of the artists have their aboriginal background listed, so it’s not clear how many of them are aboriginal. Even so, the fact that aboriginal people and stories are presented so many different ways in *Moonshot* is a testament to how fruitful a collaboration between non-indigenous and indigenous creators can be; a telling contrast to one-sided representations. As Caddo scholar and contributor Michael Sheyahshe states in his introduction, the book works both as a representation of indigenous peoples and as an example of what a cross-cultural collaboration can look like when it’s successful.



From “Ochek.” Art by Haiwei Hou

What's fascinating (and profoundly instructional) about the stories is how they represent indigeneity and its history in so many different ways. Some of the stories, like "Ochek," by David Robertson and Haiwei Hou, and "Coyote and the Pebbles," by Dayton Edmonds and Micah Farritor, are relatively straightforward adaptations of aboriginal creation stories. In "Ochek," a fisher (a member of the weasel family, not a fisherman) sacrifices its life to bring summer and warmth to the earth, and his son remembers him by looking at the night sky. "Coyote and the Pebbles" tells the story of how a mistake by Coyote — sometimes a trickster, sometimes a guide, sometimes a storyteller, and here, all three — had a role in the creation of the stars, and how the other animals still punish him for it.

At a simple level, these are pleasant, affecting stories from a culture that isn't wanting for myths. But these are *our* stories, and seeing them continue is important. Reading "Ochek" and "Coyote and the Pebbles," I remembered being told similar stories as a small child. I'd forgotten them — after all, there are a *lot* of creation myths, and almost as many Coyote stories, so it's easy to forget specific ones — but here they were, on the page, in a form I'd never seen them before, told by people I've never met.

In that moment, I felt my history and my culture. Not as an old story I'd forgotten, but as something alive and changing. Something that is out there, still, that I can touch. This might sound like such a little thing, but North American culture is filled with images of aboriginal people as we were: the proverbial injun. Dead. It so rarely includes our stories and ourselves.

These stories are a reminder that we are alive, that we are a line through to our pasts, and that we have never been broken. Ochek's son remembers him by looking at the stars. Stories like this are a the same reminder to us. We are alive.



From “Tlcho Nàowo.” Art by Nicholas Burns

Moonshot is all about this line, from the past and through more contemporary times. Elizabeth LaPensée and Claude St. Aubin’s “Copper Heart,” set in a 1905 mining town, tells a story where connection to the old stories literally saves lives. Ian Ross, Lovern Kindzierski and Peter Dawes’ “Home” presents a counterargument to Indiana Jones’ famous line, “This belongs in a museum,” where an indigenous man in the modern day repatriates the remains of one of his people that have been greedily ‘preserved’ for public display. It’s a little on the nose, but it’s genuine.

Unilaterally successful is Richard Van Camp, Rosa Mantla and Nicholas Burns’ story “Tlcho Nàowo,” where an ehtsi teaches her grandkids about the titular holiday — loosely similar to Dia de Los Muertos — and the importance of remembering one’s ancestors and loved ones who have passed; of respecting that line throughout our peoples, as well as its continuance. It’s a sweet story, where kids initially more interested in Halloween are transfixed by their ehtsi’s story, which ends with a prayer and appeal for all. It’s a quiet moment, common and important all the same. This and “Copper Heart” present the closest thing there is to a single *Moonshot* thesis: that we continue as peoples, and so do our stories. It’s important that they are told and shared, because it’s how we stay alive. LaPensée’s narrator in “Copper Heart” instructs us “to keep living the stories.”

Where does this line of stories take us? *Moonshot* very interestingly presents not just the pasts and presents of indigenous peoples, but some of its futures. Todd Houseman and Ben Shannon’s “Ayanisach” is a spin on the sci-fi dystopia where an invading settler force that disrespects the land has brought about ruin, and like “Home,” it’s politically blunt, with the name of the European settler analogue being named the “dispectors.” In general, *Moonshot* is at its weakest in these blunt moments, but “Ayanisach” is also a story about families and the preservation of culture through oral storytelling, and it’s more successful as a message of hope through storytelling.



From “Ue-Pucase.” Art by David Cutler

Extremely interesting, however, are Arigon Starr & David Cutler’s “Ue-Pucase: Water Master” and Sheyahshe & George Freeman’s “Strike and Bolt.” These two stories present something I’ve never seen before: traditional stories set in an optimistic future where aboriginal people have spread to the stars.

As “Ochek” and “Coyote and the Pebbles” discuss earlier in the anthology, many aboriginal people view the earth as a reflection of the stars above, and the stars as a source of teachings. The indigeno-futurism presented in “Ue-Pucase” and “Strike and Bolt” are a natural extension of this idea, and frankly, given the often fraught discussions of aboriginal politics in daily existence, it’s refreshing and very much appreciated to see these futures where aboriginal people have thrived and shared their teachings through the galaxy.

David Cutler’s Legion of Superheroes-evoking costumes and George Freeman’s Jack Kirby-esque designs are a striking reprieve from the grit and violence often associated with aboriginal stories in the real world. To get not only aboriginal science fiction but some that is bright, shiny and aspirational, is immensely important in how it shows a positive alternative to real traumas. Simply put, there aren’t that many stories like this for aboriginal people.

One of the most striking effects of the anthology, however, can be seen in the first story of the book, which isn’t original to *Moonshot*. “Vision Quest: Echo,” written and painted by [David Mack](#), was originally published by Marvel Comics as part of its *Daredevil* series at the time. In that context, Maya Lopez’s story is often one of violence: the death

of her father; being sent to kill Daredevil; the expression of her superpower of mimicry as largely a tool of violence.

After her introduction by Mack, who is of Cherokee descent, Maya was rarely written as indigenous, with many teams instead focusing on her Latina roots. She was last seen in Brian Michael Bendis' *Moon Knight*, being ignominiously killed to give Marc Spector motivation. In *Moonshot*, however, coming after Jeffrey Veregge's moving pinup "Preserver," discussing basket weaving as a preservation of stories and acting as a prelude to old stories made new like "Ochek," Maya's story is very different. It sets the stage for the book's theme of continuance. It speaks profoundly and movingly of the powers of storytelling as shamanism — think Grant Morrison with less irony.

But most importantly, Mack's piece discusses positive aboriginal relationships and identity and the healing nature of community and the reservation, told with Indian Sign Language. It reclaims Maya's indigeneity, simply by presenting it in a different setting and context.



From "Vision Quest: Echo." Art by David Mack

This context of positive indigeneity is so important and so, so valuable. The common narrative of aboriginal people in North America is one of violence and struggle: against colonialism and against the issues in our communities. A lot of media, both by indigenous and non-indigenous artists, represents this, in good ways and bad.

But pay attention. When given a book to share their own stories, the aboriginal creators in *Moonshot* overwhelmingly rejected this grittiness. Instead, they told stories about their ancestors and their families. They told stories about sacrifice and sometimes sadness, but balanced with a sense of joy, strength, continuity and purpose. They drew a line from their past to themselves, pointing towards possible futures where they thrived and loved each other like they always have, and always will.

I can't deny a need to talk about the negative stories and realities, too. There's room for those stories. But sometimes, what you need to keep going on is to be shown that you can.

It's easy to view praise like this as hyperbole. Michael Sheyahshe introduces the book by saying, "Hyperbole aside, this *has* to be the greatest collection of stories from indigenous people to date." He's not wrong. *Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection* is important. It's an invaluable collection of indigenous stories that shares us in our multitudes, across time and space. It's also not just a great collection of indigenous stories; it is, simply, one of the most important comics of the year, and of my life. I will be returning to it when I need to be reminded that my line keeps going.

Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection can be purchased from [Alternate History Comics](#) and [Amazon Canada](#).

Read More: <http://comicsalliance.com/moonshot-indigenous-comics-collection/?trackback=tsmclip>

Sharon Shorty is storyteller in residence at Vancouver library

Yukoner is seeking inspiration from landmarks tied to her family history

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 30, 2015 10:00 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 30, 2015 10:54 AM CT



Sharon Shorty is a well-known storyteller and actor in the Yukon. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

A Yukoner has finished her first month as the Aboriginal Storyteller in Residence at the Vancouver Public Library.

Sharon Shorty, a member of the Tlingit First Nation and Northern Tutchone, says she was looking for inspiration.

"I've been [telling stories for] twenty-something years and I just wanted to get re-invigorated," she said.

As the storyteller in residence, Shorty has had the opportunity to share her stories — many passed down from her grandmothers — at a day camp for teenagers and at a public event, but there's also been time to explore the city.

The Lion's Gate Bridge holds a particular appeal for Shorty, as her dad used to work there, and she likes the symbolism of bridging the community with First Nations culture.

Shorty said the first month of her residency has passed at "hyper speed," but she still has three to go.

The Vancouver Public Library selects one storyteller for its residency program every year.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/sharon-shorty-is-storyteller-in-residence-at-vancouver-library-1.3204899>

Manitoba Inuit Association moves in with Winnipeg Art Gallery

"The co-location embodies the spirit in which our two organizations work together"

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, September 03, 2015 - 9:45 am



Throatsingers perform at an event organized by the Manitoba Inuit Association, which has moved in the Winnipeg Art Gallery. (PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MIA)

The Winnipeg Art Gallery has a new roommate: the Manitoba Inuit Association.

With its new location in the Winnipeg Art Gallery's Studio building at the corner of Memorial Boulevard and St. Mary Avenue, the MIA plans to share more than just a space with the gallery, known widely as the WAG.

The two organizations have already collaborated on numerous projects to celebrate Inuit art and culture, "a relationship that will only be strengthened with new initiatives," a Sept. 1 news release said.

"Our dynamic partnership and collaborations over the years has manifested into the recent move of Manitoba Inuit Association offices into the Winnipeg Art Gallery," Rachel Dutton, MIA's executive director, said in the release.

"The co-location embodies the spirit in which our two organizations work together to raise the profile of Inuit in this province and across Canada."

About 450 live in Manitoba, with the majority living in Winnipeg. But the association for Manitoba Inuit serves all Inuit from around Canada who find themselves in Manitoba to get health care, to study or to live.

The MIA recently lost its federal funding for a program to help Inuit succeed — and stay — in school.

"We are in the process of negotiating funding with the province, so until an agreement is penned the program has been put on hold. Very unfortunate and frustrating," Dutton told *Nunatsiaq News*.

The MIA says research has estimated some 15,000 Inuit also access health services in Manitoba.

"So as small as the Inuit population is in Manitoba, our organization is looking at ways we can work with allied health service providers in the province, to better support Inuit who are traveling outside Inuit Nunangat, to Manitoba to access health services, Dutton said.

The WAG and the Manitoba Inuit Association have collaborated on a number of projects, including the Legend of Kiviuq puppet show and the WAG-Baker Lake Dialogue event, an artistic exchange. The WAG also helps to connect Manitoba Inuit artists to buyers and supporters.

"Inuit culture and communities are also at the heart of the WAG, which holds in trust the world's largest public collection of contemporary Inuit art," said the news release from the WAG, which is planning to build a \$45-million Inuit Art and Learning Centre which will cover 40,000 square feet over three floors.

You can learn more about the Manitoba Inuit Association at the [its website](#) or follow the association's activities on Facebook and Twitter.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674manitoba_inuit_association_moves_in_with_the_winnipeg_art_gallery/

Inuit artists carve out a place at York University

York's Mobilizing Inuit Cultural Heritage project commissioned a sculpture tied to an Inuit legend.



Artist Ruben Komangapik takes a circular saw to the granite that will form part of the "Ahqahizu" sculpture at York University. Komangapik and fellow Inuit artist Kuzy Curley are working with York students and members of the Jane Finch community to carve what began as a 62,000-pound (28 tonne) piece of stone.

By: [Sarah-Joyce Battersby](#) Pan Am and Parapan Am Games Reporter, Published on Wed Sep 02 2015

Thirty-eight days and 12 worn-out diamond-encrusted saw blades later, a legend is coming to life on a far corner of York University's campus.

What was once a 28-tonne chunk of granite is being formed into a sculpture by Inuit artists Ruben Komangapik and Kuzy Curley, with the help of York students and Jane-Finch community members.

The piece, called *Ahqahizu*, depicts the Inuit legend of spirits in the northern lights playing soccer with a walrus skull for a ball.

"Everybody always has a view of who we are, so by enlightening them through art it's a good way to inspire people in my culture," Komangapik, 39, told the Star in between cuts.

He has been carving since he learned the skills at age 9, watching his parents and grandfather in Pond Inlet, Nunavut, a town more than 3,000 kilometres north of Toronto.

Storytelling is important in Inuit culture, he said — an oral tradition in which objects, images and legends take the place of written language.

“Everything around us, from our houses to everything we wear, is a result of art. It’s a great way to communicate, even if the person speaks a different language,” he said.



Chris Preece, 23, is an environmental studies student at York University. He was chosen to work on the "Ahqahizu" sculpture at York alongside Inuit artists Ruben Komangapik and Kuzy Curley.

Chop saw blades and work gloves are torn up and worn out on the Stanstead granite — which is named for the Quebec eastern township area where it’s harvested — used for the piece.

The stone may be tough, but the potential for mistakes grows as the work comes closer to completion.

The team smashed chunks, up to half a tonne, off the original structure to unveil the bicycle-kicking soccer player, in a field near Steeles Ave. W. and Keele St.

“Right now, one wrong hit could take off an arm,” said Chris Preece, 23, an environmental studies student at York.

Though he saw some Inuit art growing up, he didn’t know the stories behind it.

“I don’t know a lot about it,” he said. “You’re not going to come across Inuit, from that far north, that often.”

Curtis McCleary, 23, was chosen to work on the project after taking a carving class with the artists at the York-TD Community Education Centre in nearby Yorkgate Mall.

For him, it was the chance to work with his hands that drew him in.

“You have just a square at one point,” he said. “You hit away until you see what comes out of it.”

The stone is the largest single piece Komangapik has worked with. For him, the size of the sculpture is an important part of the story, one he hopes will inspire Inuit students who see the sculpture on campus.

“It’s really important — the scale of it, the possibility of it — that it’s being done,” he said. “Hopefully they’ll be able to get inspired into where they can say: If this impossibility can be done, I can do it, too.”

Originally designed with the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games in mind, the unveiling has been pushed back to early October. But Komangapik isn’t worried about delays.

“It’s going to outlive us,” he said. “Granite is forever.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/09/02/inuit-artists-carve-out-a-place-at-york-university.html>

Halifax tattoo artist learning traditional First Nations art from Fredericton sculptor

By [Shelley Steeves](#) Senior Correspondent Global News, September 2, 2015 8:45 am



FREDERICTON – Halifax tattoo artist and sculptor Gordon Sparks will spend the next few weeks learning traditional First Nations art from master aboriginal sculptor Ned Bear in Fredericton.

Sparks says he is learning more than a new art form, he’s learning about himself.

“It does feel like it was meant to be. It feels like the spirits guided the whole thing together.”

Sparks was recently awarded an \$11,000 grant through Arts Nova Scotia to study alongside his mentor in Fredericton.

“I refer to my masks as pawakan. I am a Plains Cree. My dad is from out west and pawakan is a spirit guide a spirit helper,” he said.

Bear says it’s an art form that he developed more than 30 years ago and it’s believed in aboriginal culture that these spirit helpers guide humans through rough times.

“When people don a mask they transform and it sort of helps them heal.”

Sparks says working with Bear has been healing for him. He grew up on the Pabineau First Nations reserve, near Bathurst. He left when he was a teenager.

“When I ended up in Moncton homeless and struggling with drugs and alcohol my life was pretty chaotic at that point.”

It’s written all over his face, which is covered in tattoos. Sparks says he spent years living life behind a protective mask of his own making.

“I sat down in the mirror and tattooed myself with a couple of bottles of wine crying about my own feelings.”

But after a chance encounter about six years ago with Bear, Sparks says his life started to change. He was inspired to pursue a career in the arts and eventually ended up in Halifax where he opened a tattoo studio and became well known for his snow sculptures.

But he says this is the first time he has sculpted something with wood. Learning the craft from Bear has not only expanded his artistic skills, Sparks says it’s been enlightening.

“Bear pointed out to me, you wear a permanent mask and I didn’t really realize that until he told it to me. It originally began as that – it began as a cage.”

But he says his facial tattoos are a gift, a reflection of his inner spirit that others can see beyond if they choose, much just like the pawakan masks he’s learning to sculpt.

“When you put it on that’s how you feel that you help people. Like, my mask has helped me helped guide my spirit to where I am today.”

Sparks will spend the next two weeks working with Bear and hopes to return to Halifax to carry on the “spirit mask” making tradition in his province.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2198870/halifax-tattoo-artist-learning-traditional-first-nations-art-from-fredericton-sculptor/>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Western Nunavut airline, GN still in court over 2011 contract beef

Adlair Aviation Ltd. seeks damages, termination of current medevac deal

JANE GEORGE, August 28, 2015 - 9:36 am



René Laserich, operations manager at Adlair Aviation Ltd., the Cambridge Bay airline his famous bush pilot father, Willy Laserich started, stands in October 2012 in front of one of the company's two hangars at the Cambridge Bay airport. (FILE PHOTO)

Nearly four years after the the Government of Nunavut ended a contract for emergency medical travel with Adlair Aviation Ltd. of Cambridge Bay and gave it to a new company — and three years after Adlair filed a lawsuit against the GN — lawyers from Adlair and the GN faced off last week at the Nunavut Court of Justice in Iqaluit.

“We were in court Aug. 17 by teleconference on my motion to get a judge to manage dates to force the case to move and block further delays,” said Ed Brogden, the lawyer for Adlair.

However, the GN’s lawyers, from the national firm Borden Ladner Gervais, have prepared, but not yet officially served a motion to the Nunavut court for a “Summary Judgment” to try to get the case dismissed on technicalities without a trial, Brogden told *Nunatsiaq News*.

That motion could be argued at Iqaluit in early December, Brogden said.

In its lawsuit against the GN, filed back in December 2012, Adlair is claiming \$31.5 million in general and punitive damages — the amount that the locally-owned company would have earned during the five-year medevac contract lost in 2011 to Aqsaqniq Airways Ltd.

When Adlair, which has done air ambulance emergency medevac work in western Nunavut since the 1970s, lost the contract it had held since 2002, this move gave rise to a long, loud controversy over GN procurement policies.

Now, Adlair wants the Nunavut court to order the GN to terminate its contract with Aqsaqniq and reassess the 2011 contract proposals.

Adlair alleges that by awarding the work to the winning bidder, Aqsaqniq, the GN caused “critical delays in their air ambulance service leading to delays in medical treatment and the death of patients, as in [the case of Betty Atighioyak in December, 2011](#).”

Adlair filed its statement of claim in December 2012. The GN filed its statement of defence in February 2013, [reported on at that time](#) by *Nunatsiaq News*.

In its bid to the GN, Aqsaqniq, with an address in Taloyoak, describes itself as a “majority Inuit-owned partnership” that includes a Yellowknife firm called Air Tindi, a subsidiary of a national aviation giant based in London, Ont. called Discovery Air.

And it’s Tindi and its fleet of aircraft that took over the medevac operation on Dec. 1, 2011 after Adlair lost the medevac contract.

Aqsaqniq is listed on Nunavut Tunngavik’s Inuit firm registry, with Naomi Eetoolook of Taloyoak named as its contact.

The GN’s Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti list of Nunavut companies lists Dennis Lyall of Taloyoak as Aqsaqniq’s contact. Another firm called “Medic North Nunavut,” owned by Kitikmeot Corp. and a southern firm called Medic North Emergency Services,” was a “co-contractor” in the winning bid.

The much-reviled NNI policy is the GN’s instrument for complying with Article 24 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, which requires that governments do things to help “Inuit” firms win contracts.

In its statement of claim, Adlair alleges Aqsaqniq is a Inuit-owned joint-venture “only on paper” and that Aqsaqniq serves merely as a “broker” for sub-contractors who are “based in southern Ontario with all operations directed outside Nunavut.”

“The Inuit content claimed by Aqsaqniq Aviation (2004) Inc. had no office, hangar, staff, equipment, aircraft or infrastructure in place at Cambridge Bay when the contract was awarded, nor did Aqsaqniq Aviation (2004) Inc. own any aircraft, supplies, equipment, nor employ any mechanics, medics, nurses or other related staff,” Adlair’s lawsuit states.

Adlair also alleges that Aqsaqniq's individual shareholders and directors have no aviation experience and that none of them are pilots or aircraft engineers.

The GN admits those allegations, but they deny an allegation that they granted a \$5 million bid adjustment to Aqsaqniq under its NNI policy.

The NNI policy allows the government, under an arithmetical formula, to overpay successful contractors if they follow certain Inuit or Nunavut ownership and employment rules.

But although Aqsaqniq successfully met the NNI's criteria, Adlair still alleges they won the contract improperly.

That's because Aqsaqniq was unable to get the aircraft and infrastructure required by the GN's request for proposals, Adlair said.

"As of December 2012, Aqsaqniq Aviation (2004) Inc. has not installed the base, facilities, staff, aircraft and equipment at Cambridge Bay that were required to meet the terms of the Request for Proposals RFP 2011-21," Adlair alleged.

Part of the original contract said that a Learjet 35A is supposed to be based in Cambridge Bay. However, since then, the air ambulance contract with the GN was modified so that a jet no longer has to be based in Cambridge Bay.

Adlair's medevac-equipped Learjet 25B remains in Cambridge Bay, but is no longer used for air ambulance services.

In its defence, the GN said that Adlair did not complete the NNI form that was attached to its request for proposals.

For that reason, the GN could not legally grant Adlair any bid adjustment on the basis of the NNI.

"As explicitly stated, if the NNI Form was not completed, no NNI bid adjustments would be granted," the GN said in its statement of defence.

The GN also pointed out that its RFP for the medevac contract stated that the GN "was not required to accept the proposal that provided the lowest cost or price, or any proposal at all."

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674western_nunavut_airline_GN_still_court_over_2011_contract_beef/

30 Sask. First Nations have yet to file financial reports to Ottawa

By Staff The Canadian Press, August 28, 2015 11:42 am



Onion Lake Cree Nation Chief Wallace Fox at a federal court hearing on Wednesday Aug. 19, 2015 in Saskatoon. Time is running out for 30 Saskatchewan First Nations who have not yet filed financial reports to Ottawa.

REGINA – Time is running out for dozens of Saskatchewan First Nations who will face funding cuts next week unless they get their paperwork done for the federal government. The deadline to file was the end of July, but Ottawa won't start withholding non-essential funding until Sept. 1.

Thirty of Saskatchewan's 70 First Nations had still not filed as of noon Thursday, a non-compliance rate of 43 per cent.

They include the Thunderchild, Ochapowace and Onion Lake First Nations.

Onion Lake is challenging the *First Nations Federal Financial Transparency Act* in court.

The act requires reserves to file their financial statements, including salaries and expenses, on the Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada website where they can be viewed by anyone who has an interest.

The case was heard in Saskatoon Federal Court last week and the judge reserved decision.

In the 40 reports filed so far in Saskatchewan, the highest-paid chief is Norman Whitehawk of the Cote First Nation with salary and expenses totalling \$194,142.

Second on the list was Chief Darcy Bear of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation with salary and expenses of \$158,772.

Salaries for chiefs and councillors are tax-free.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2190736/30-sask-first-nations-have-yet-to-file-financial-reports-to-ottawa/>

Indigenous entrepreneurs share philosophy of giving

By Kerry Benjoe, Leader-Post August 28, 2015



From left to right at Shop Indigenous are employee Karla Bowman and owners Heather Abbey and Samuel Tipewan on August 27, 2015 in Saskatoon. The backpacks are part of a donation toward a back to school supply drive that Abbey has launched.

REGINA – Despite being in business for only a month, a Saskatoon entrepreneur is doing what she can to help families in need this school year.

Heather Abbey, CEO and founder of shopindig.ca, set up a cart in Midtown Plaza to market her own line of Kiowa Sage T-shirts and other products by indigenous artists.

While business has been great and Abbey is thankful for the opportunities she has received, she is already prepared to start giving back.

Abbey was struck by how many families were struggling financially with back to school shopping.

“I thought, ‘Gee I wonder if there is a way we can help?’ ” said Abbey.

She contacted a couple of her mentors for support and from there she launched Shop Indig School Challenge, which collects new school supplies for families in need.

“I don’t want to be one of those entrepreneurs who is all me, me, me,” she said. “I would rather bring my people up with me as I achieve success. I know there are not many people who have the opportunity to give back.”

Abbey is not the only indigenous entrepreneur who believes philanthropy is important.

“It’s ingrained in our businesses right from the start,” she said. “We don’t wait until we are making X-amount of dollars because we know we have the opportunity and the ability to give back.”

Kendal Netmaker, CEO of Neechie Gear, an athletic clothing brand launched his business to help empower youth and he has been recognized nationally and internationally for his efforts. A portion of the sales of his Neechie Gear products is used to help fund extracurricular sports and scholarships for students from low-income families.

He believes his Cree heritage plays a role in his business philosophy.

“I feel that if I’m blessed with something in the future, if I’m blessed with a business that is able to make us a little bit of profit then I feel that it is my responsibility to share some of that,” said Netmaker.

Sabrina Cote-Brooks, a Regina artisan, doesn’t sell her Wurlgurl Jewelry products on a large scale, but she also believes in the idea of giving back.

“I choose to help others and my community because it is the right thing to do,” she said. “I’ve always told myself one day I will be able to give back to my community in some way. My grandparents always told me to share, to share what I have with those who need it. So when I can I try to do that.

Netmaker believes success is linked with the amount one is able to give to others and shares that advice with new entrepreneurs.

He believes indigenous entrepreneurs are setting a trend because he has noticed other clothing companies popping up that follow the same philosophy of giving a percentage back to something charitable.

“It makes me feel honoured that we are having an impact like that because that’s what it’s going to take to change the world we live in,” said Netmaker.

Initially, Abbey’s goal was to gather enough supplies to fill 24 backpacks, but said she has received many requests for assistance and plans to work until that need is filled.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/Indigenous+entrepreneurs+share+philosophy+giving/11325063/story.html>

Onion Lake Cree Nation file for UN action against Canada

By [Elizabeth McSheffrey](#) in [News](#) | September 2nd 2015



Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver(right) debates with Chief Wallace Fox of Onion Lake First Nation before they try to push their way into the House of Commons and are restrained by House of Commons guards on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Tuesday. CP/Fred

The [Onion Lake Cree Nation](#) has become the first Indigenous group in Canada to file for emergency action from the United Nations concerning the controversial First Nations Financial Transparency Act.

Chief Okimaw Wallace Fox sent a plea to the UN [Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#) (CERD) on Tuesday asking for international supervision as his community engages the Government of Canada on what he calls a “continued violation of treaty rights.”

“There was never any discussion between our Nations and the Conservative Government,” he said of the bill in his letter to the president of CERD. “The Minister of Indian Affairs is imposing this legislation on First Nations even though its constitutionality is in question before the courts.”

The [First Nations Financial Transparency Act](#) (FNFTA) came into effect in 2014, requiring First Nations to submit their audited financial statements for the previous fiscal year to the government, including salaries and expenses of chiefs and councillors.

As of this morning, the [CBC reported](#) that 197 out of the 581 applicable First Nations (roughly 33 per cent) had not yet complied with the rules, despite a Monday statement from Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt threatening to withhold future funding.

“Beginning September 1st, 2015, bands that have yet to comply with the law will see funding for non-essential services withheld,” he said. “Further actions may include seeking court orders to compel compliance.”

The Onion Lake Cree Nation, which straddles both Saskatchewan and Alberta and counts over 5,500 members, rejected his comments that this funding could be kept by the government in the first place.

“In the Court proceedings, it was made clear the monies flowing to First Nations are ‘Indian monies’ allocated by Treasury Board,” he told the UN in his letter. “In an attempt to force compliance, the government has halted our non-essential funds and withheld housing approval for our needy families.”

He also said Indigenous people are the only people in Canada who have “no right of privacy,” and that First Nations have always complied with requirements of being transparent and accountable to its own citizens.

“We are appealing to CERD to communicate concern about the situation in Canada in relation to this legislation and the heavy handed approach being taken by the state against Indigenous Peoples who have constitutional and international treaty rights,” he said.

The federal government has already taken the Onion Lake Cree Nation to court to force compliance with the FNFTA, and after two days of hearings, a federal court reserved his decision.

Direct Link: <http://www.nationalobserver.com/2015/09/02/news/onion-lake-cree-nation-file-un-action-against-canada>

Almost 200 First Nations to lose millions worth of funding for failing to post financial information online

[Lee Berthiaume, Postmedia News](#) | September 3, 2015 | Last Updated: Sep 3 8:56 AM ET



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

The Conservative government will start withholding millions of dollars in salaries and other funding from nearly 200 First Nations after they failed to publish detailed financial information online, as is required by a controversial federal law.

Under the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, 581 First Nations from across the country were required to post audited financial statements on the Internet by midnight Tuesday or risk losing non-essential funding from the federal government.

The information to be made public included how much money individual band leaders made during the year, no matter whether the income came from federal funding or the First Nation's business interests.

The federal Aboriginal Affairs department said 191 – or nearly one-third – had not posted their information as of Wednesday. While more are expected to trickle in over the next few days, the figure is still striking after only 10 First Nations did not comply with the law last year.

All Canadians, including First Nations, want and deserve transparency and accountability from their governments

In a statement sent by the Conservative party, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said band councils that have not met the deadline will receive formal reminders. But he added that starting this week, funding for non-essential services will be withheld. Other actions, such as court orders, may also be taken.

“All Canadians, including First Nations, want and deserve transparency and accountability from their governments,” Valcourt said. The law applies “the same principles of transparency and accountability to First Nations governments that already exist for other governments in Canada,” he added.

Speaking in Ottawa Wednesday, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde described the government's move to withhold funding from First Nations as “heavyhanded.”

“A lot of those people in those communities who need those resources, you’re going to make them suffer,” he said. “That’s what’s going to happen. It’s not proper, it’s not right.”

Bellegarde said a number of First Nations plan to post their financial statements online but struggled to meet the deadline because of the extra work and cost.

Yet he also said some First Nations have questioned why the government’s push for transparency isn’t being reciprocated by Aboriginal Affairs, which held back \$1 billion in approved spending over a five-year period. Moreover, he said the law goes too far in terms of revealing personal and commercial information.

Bellegarde said the AFN has no issue with transparency and accountability, but requiring First Nations to post the information on the Internet, “it’s a little too far. It’s a little too public.” The same is true for band leaders having to report income from private ventures, he said.

“Those two pieces are problematic,” he said. “Why do we have to do that? Why do First Nations have to do that? So the legislation is flawed in that regard.”

The law is currently the subject of a federal court case in Saskatoon, where the government is trying to force five First Nations to publish their financial statements online. The First Nations, two of which have launched lawsuits against the government, say the law violates privacy and confidentiality.

Two days of hearings were held in August. The judge has not yet released a decision. One of the First Nations has also written to the United Nations to complain about the law.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau had previously indicated he would repeal the legislation if he wins the election, though the party now says a Liberal government would review all laws affecting First Nations that were brought in under the Conservative government without consultation.

The NDP originally voted against the legislation, but Leader Tom Mulcair has not said what he will do if elected to power.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/canadian-politics/almost-200-first-nations-to-lose-millions-worth-of-funding-for-failing-to-post-financial-information-online>

First Nation financial reporting system flawed, prof says

Mark NIELSEN / Prince George Citizen
September 3, 2015 09:57 PM

A University of Victoria professor has misgivings about the federal government's requirement that First Nations submit financial statements and chief and council member salaries for posting on the Aboriginal and Northern Development Canada website.

"The principle is good, the implementation has been very poor," said John Borrows, Law Foundation Chair in Aboriginal Justice and Governance at UVic.

He said Ottawa failed to get "buy-in and willingness" from First Nations prior to passing the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (FNFTA), which came into effect last year.

There are other ways to meet the goal, Borrows added, noting much of the information was already available although it was not as easily accessed prior to the FNFTA.

Particularly troublesome for Borrows is that First Nations are required to disclose numbers related to funding from the federal government that might be intermingled with private investment.

He said that raises the risk of business secrets being inadvertently unveiled which could a chill on attracting outside money.

Chief and council members' pay is often not strictly for their political work.

"It depends on the community, but they could be running four or five different investment branches," Borrows said.

"There could be a timber company, a mining company, there could be a convenience store or a gas station and these various activities are just not accurately reflected when you get a one lump sum reporting of a figure on a website."

First Nations are extensively audited in terms of how they spend federal funding.

"Every year First Nations are audited on how they're doing with the money that's extended to them," Borrows said.

"Those audits sometimes take you into the next fiscal year and the money's not released... it puts many First Nations communities in a financial crunch where they're having to borrow from Paul to pay Peter.

"There's not a stable, long-term measured funding mechanism in place because of continual auditing."

Ottawa should take a look to the United States for a better system, Borrows suggested.

"Because they've got them on a schedule with a longer time horizon and measured milestones in the interim period, it's much smoother running their civil services in their communities," Borrows said.

First Nations had until midnight Tuesday to submit the documentation or risk losing funding from the federal government for non-essential services.

The Lheidli T'enneh were among the 182 First Nations who missed the deadline but it intends to have everything ready by Sept. 16.

See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/first-nation-financial-reporting-system-flawed-prof-says-1.2050103#sthash.JeeFp2mN.dpuf>

First Nations Transparency Act: Northerners, First Nations react to issue

'It really hit a nerve,' says Ben Powless

By Tiar Wilson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 03, 2015 6:00 PM CT Last Updated: Sep 03, 2015 6:00 PM CT

As many First Nations in the North face having funding cut after missing this year's First Nations Financial Transparency Act deadline, the issue has people talking in the Northwest Territories and across the country.

This is the second year First Nations have had to file their financial audits online with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development since the act was made [law in August 2014](#).

As of Thursday, there are 183 communities across the country that still haven't filed, 21 of which are in the North — 17 in the Northwest Territories and four in the Yukon.

The cuts would not affect health, education, or housing dollars but program services for band members within those areas — such as youth recreation and housing subsidies — would be affected.

The majority of N.W.T. First Nations — such as K'atlodeeche and Lutselk'e for example — say they [want to comply but the process is costly and because it's time consuming, it often takes longer than the deadline given](#).

Others such as Nahanni Butte and Jean Marie River say their audits have already been sent to Ottawa.

Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus says Canadians need to know the difference between public funds and Indian monies from the Treasury Board of Canada that Aboriginal Affairs administers.

"This is why we're adamant that this relationship is between the federal government, ourselves and our own citizens."

Man starts meme

Ben Powless, a Mohawk/Ojibway living in Ottawa, says the news that Aboriginal Affairs will withhold funds to more than one-third of First Nations across the country as a way to enforce the act upsets him.



Mohawk/Ojibway activist Ben Powless says he's fed up with the corrupt chief image that surrounds the First Nations Financial Transparency Act. He says Canadians need to question the federal government's lack of transparency.

"It's frustrating and really infuriating. It really hit a nerve," Powless said.

Powless points to [a 2014 CBC story](#) on the prime minister's office's refusal to reveal how many of its staffers make more than \$150,000 that was being widely shared on Facebook this week.

"The government has decided to frame First Nations as not being accountable and non-transparent," he said. "Meanwhile, they've been actually found to be some of the most unaccountable people in the entire country."

Powless said he was tired of hearing about the idea of corrupt chiefs who only want to line their pockets, so he made a meme with the infamous picture of Harper wearing a headdress, reading "It's a good thing I can count on Canadians to be upset at First Nations Chiefs and not me."

In 24 hours, it was shared directly from his Facebook page more than 2,000 times.

"It's not just First Nations sharing it but a lot of non-First Nations people are sharing it which I also found to be a bit surprising," he said.

"I think it's hit a nerve and people are starting to see this government is behaving in a way that's not just demoralizing the First Nations but I think it's kinda racist the way they've spun this whole thing."

'Over the top'

Yellowknife resident Stuart MacDonald says he isn't a fan of the tactics the government is using.

"It's obviously not a level playing field," he said.



Stuart MacDonald of Yellowknife says 'To go over the top and say that First Nations groups are more guilty than anybody else, I think, is very much hypocrisy.' (CBC)

"They are creating a top-down administration on First Nations. To go over the top and suddenly say that First Nations groups are more guilty than anybody else, I think, is very much hypocrisy.

"The government says they recognize First Nations right to the land but [then say] your semi-autonomy over this land does not allow you the privacy that it allows us as government. Well maybe the matter in which resources are allocated within a First Nations community are also a matter of local or internal security."

Others, like Robin Young of Yellowknife, aren't so quick to pick one side over the other.

"This government, I don't think, is known for being transparent," said Young.

"I think they are pretty bad about opening themselves up in the past. But I don't necessarily think that means other people shouldn't do the same as well. I think that everyone should be up to the same standards."

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada says the funding cuts to the First Nations will continue until their finances are posted to its website.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/first-nations-transparency-act-northerners-first-nations-react-to-issue-1.3214406>

Aboriginal Community Development

Aboriginal Community in Canada Declares Emergency Over Unsafe Drinking Water

By [Hilary Beaumont](#)

August 28, 2015 | 10:10 am

In an event that's all too common in Canada's Aboriginal communities, a First Nation in Ontario has declared a state of emergency due to undrinkable water.

The drinking water issues in Grassy Narrows First Nation are not new. The community has been on a boil water advisory [for more than a year](#), and their well systems have been on do not consume orders for more than two years — but recent tests revealing toxic chemicals in the water supply prompted the First Nation to declare an emergency.

Mercury and DBPs (plasticizers also used in adhesives) are present in the water, and [CBC News reported](#) turbidity (a measure of particulate cloudiness) in the community's drinking water at 120 times the amount allowed by provincial rules.

"We're scared that our drinking water has been unsafe for a long time now and the federal government does not seem to care at all," Councillor Rudy Turtle said in a release. "Our people have already been poisoned by mercury and now we have to deal with unsafe drinking water."

For now, Grassy Narrows has to rely on bottled water deliveries.

The community's water treatment plant was built 10 years ago but has never worked properly, CBC stated, and a risk assessment dating back to 2001 showed DBPs and cloudy water are not new problems.

Though it may seem unthinkable to those raised in urban centres, the situation in Grassy Narrows is shockingly normal for First Nations across Canada.

Excluding British Columbia, 91 Aboriginal communities are currently on boil water advisories across Canada, some of them for as many as 20 years. Many of these communities rely on bottled water shipments that are trucked or flown in.

In May, a nearby First Nation, Shoal Lake 40, declared a state of emergency after the ferry they rely on to bring them shipments of bottled water broke down. Many members of the community were forced to evacuate.

"It's a challenge to bring water in from Kenora... it's just very very difficult for my people to survive out here during this time," Shoal Lake 40 Chief Erwin Redsky told Global News.

Shoal Lake 40 has been under a boil water advisory for 17 years and does not have a water treatment plant. They have been campaigning for years for government funding to build an access road that would make construction of a treatment plant affordable.

Direct Link: <https://news.vice.com/article/aboriginal-community-in-canada-declares-emergency-over-unsafe-drinking-water>

Conservatives response to First Nations water problems 'a crime', Howard Hampton says

NDP, Liberals say Grassy Narrows state of emergency highlights Conservative neglect

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 28, 2015 5:06 PM ET Last Updated: Aug 28, 2015 5:06 PM ET



The NDP's Howard Hampton says the Conservatives are directly to blame for the state of emergency declared this week at Grassy Narrows First Nation. (Jacques Boissinot/Canadian Press)

The state of emergency over water quality concerns at Grassy Narrows First Nation is a "shameful" situation created by Conservative neglect, according to the NDP.

The First Nation, located about 100 kilometres north of Kenora, Ont., [declared the emergency this week over potentially cancer-causing chemicals found in its local tap water.](#)

The water treatment plant in Grassy Narrows First Nation is missing basic parts and has not functioned properly since it was built about a decade ago, according to Deputy Chief Randy Fobister.

"It's a crime that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs Canada sent back almost a billion dollars of funding that could have been used to address these safe, clean drinking water problems," said Howard Hampton, the NDP candidate in the Kenora riding. "But the Harper Conservatives decided it's not a priority."

Lapsed spending

Hampton was referring to the so-called [lapsed spending by Aboriginal Affairs over the last five years on social services](#) that was revealed in Privy Council Office documents obtained by CBC earlier this year.

Aboriginal Affairs did not meet CBC's deadline for responding to questions about the situation at Grassy Narrows.

The campaign office for Conservative candidate, Greg Rickford, sent a written statement to CBC.

It said, in part, "since 2006, we have invested approximately \$3 billion to complete more than 220 major projects and funded maintenance of over 1,200 water and wastewater treatment projects."

The statement also said federal officials are reaching out to Grassy Narrows to see how they can be of assistance.

Dozens of boil water advisories in Kenora riding

There are more than two dozen First Nations in the Kenora riding with boil water advisories. [Ten of those communities haven't had safe drinking water for more than a decade.](#)



Liberal candidate Bob Nault says his party's infrastructure spending would help improve water quality in First Nations. (bobnault.ca)

Bob Nault is the Liberal candidate in the riding, and a former minister of Indian Affairs. He said his party's promise to nearly double Canada's spending on infrastructure would help solve the problems.

"We've just made a very large announcement yesterday of massive infrastructure dollars being put into our economy and one of those is water and waste water treatment plants," Nault said.

The Green Party's Ember McKillop said she is "absolutely astounded" that Grassy Narrows is in such "dire straits", especially because of its long history dealing with mercury contamination.

McKillop said the Green's health policy makes a commitment to clean water for all communities by 2020.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/conservatives-response-to-first-nations-water-problems-a-crime-howard-hampton-says-1.3207811>

Chiefs to honour First Nations women

By Kerry Benjoe, Leader-Post August 31, 2015 11:41 AM



Strength and resiliency are characteristics worth taking note of and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations plans on doing that next month.

REGINA – Strength and resiliency are characteristics worth taking note of and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations plans on doing that next month.

It is hosting the Strength of Our Women Awards in Saskatoon on Sept. 10, but first it needs to find 12 women to honour in categories that include: arts and entertainment, business, culture and spirituality, education, environment, health/wellness, law/justice, leadership/advocacy, lifetime achievement, matriarch, sports and youth.

“Historically we know how important our roles were and are and we want everyone to know that First Nations women are extraordinary and not disposable and not victims,”

said FSIN Interim Chief Kimberly Jonathan. “It’s time we honour our women and our girls.”

The awards are described as a way to showcase the contributions indigenous women make to their communities while continuing to foster a sense of pride within themselves.

“Our First Nations leadership has been looking for ways to celebrate our women,” said Jonathan. “We are always thinking of ways to uphold our women and I think this is one of the best ways to bring people together and organizations together and to lift the women up.”

The awards are not only to celebrate the contributions and strength of First Nations women but to bring attention to the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women.

The funds raised from the awards gala are to be used for initiatives that support the families of missing and murdered indigenous women and other related Saskatchewan First Nations Women Council strategies.

According to the FSIN, First Nations women are found to be nearly three times more likely than non-First Nations women to report being a victim of a violent crime. The crimes being committed against First Nations women occur at disproportionate rates and the acts of violence are also more severe.

Jonathon would like to see the awards become an annual event.

“We hope that they will inspire, empower and encourage our First Nations women and that people will see this as a necessary opportunity to celebrate our women and encourage our successes,” she said.

However, before women can be recognized the awards selection committee needs to receive nominations by Sept. 4

All submissions will be reviewed and the top four in each category will be notified by Sept. 9 with the winners being announced at the awards gala on Sept. 10.

Each nomination must include a 250-word summary about the nominee accompanied by two letters of reference along with photo.

The event is open to everyone.

“It took society, it took all of us to get to the place where women are devalued, so it’s going to take all of us to bring our women back to the value they are deserving of,” she said.

Information on the event can be found online at www.fsin.com or by calling Paulette Smallchild at 306-956-1034.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/Chiefs+honour+First+Nations+women/11325129/story.html>

Quebec agency proposes new Arctic housing designed for Inuit lifestyle

Design includes insulated shell, storage for rifles, and a cold and warm porch

By Marc Montgomery, Radio-Canada International, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 02, 2015 9:54 AM CT Last Updated: Sep 02, 2015 9:54 AM CT



A concept image of new prototype housing, designed specifically for northern climates and Inuit culture. (Fournier, Gesrovitz, Moss, Drolet and Assoc. Architects)

Typically, building design in Canada's far north has consisted more or less of designs from the south. These have not been particularly well-suited to the climate, nor to the lifestyle of the majority of residents who are Inuit or aboriginal.

In the province of Quebec, portions of the far northern region known as Nunavik, stretch above the 60th parallel into the Arctic and adequate housing has long been an issue in the far northern region.

Now the Societe d'habitation du Quebec, (SHQ) the province's social housing agency, has proposed a new housing design for the far north.



Site of construction of prototype design in spring of this year in Nunavik, the northern region of the province of Quebec. The two prototypes are expected to be ready later this year. (SHQ)

The agency has been working on the design since 2012, in collaboration with a Montreal architectural firm and the regional agencies Makivik Corporation and Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau. The latter two provided input as to design needs and traditions of Inuit and Cree inhabitants, especially as it relates to interior layout.

The result of the collaboration will be a prototype design comprising two units currently being built and expected to be ready later this year in the community of Quaqtaq on the shore of Diana Bay in Hudson Strait.



The prototype houses are being built in the far northern community of Quaqtak (red pointer). (Google Maps)

The design incorporates a highly insulated shell (roof, walls, floor) and triple glazed windows for energy efficiency, and an innovative heating system involving heat exchange from the water heater.



Snow piled up against a building blocking the doorway and stairs; one of the considerations of the new design was attention to aerodynamics to avoid the accumulation of snow blocking access. (SHQ)

There is additional storage in the attic, kitchen and laundry room. Inuit tradition has been taken into account by creating a cold porch and a warm porch.

Additionally, locked storage cabinets are built in for hunting rifles and ammunition, the kitchen has a large island counter that can be moved when residents need more space, and underneath is storage for large chopping boards.



Artist rendering of FGMDA Architects design of the Canadian High Arctic Research Station in Cambridge Bay, Victoria Island, Nunavut to be completed in 2017. (science.gc.ca)

The home will sit on piles driven into the ground to provide a solid footing in the rocky terrain but also take into account situations where climate change is melting the permafrost layer.

The Montreal firm behind the prototype, FGMDA Architects, have designed a number of buildings in the Arctic including the Canadian High Arctic Research Station in Cambridge Bay which is slated to be completed in 2017.

SHQ has not yet said who will live in the two new housing units, nor at what cost.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/quebec-agency-proposes-new-arctic-housing-designed-for-inuit-lifestyle-1.3212716>

Aboriginal Food and Coffee Are Reshaping One of Montreal's Roughest Parks

September 2, 2015 / 3:00 pm

By [Nick Rose](#)



“I used to be scared to come here. It was pretty rough, but it’s a lot better now.”

Shirley Dewind is an Ojibwe originally from Winnipeg, Manitoba. She works at the Roundhouse Cafe, a small coffee shop serving aboriginal fare in Cabot Square, a notoriously tough park in downtown Montreal.

“I applied at the Native Friendship Center and I ended up getting the job. I love working here, it’s fun. I like serving coffee,” she says.



Shirley Dewind and Al Harrington. All photos by Nick Rose.

The Roundhouse Café has been open for just over a month and is focusing on hiring aboriginal employees like Shirley and serving as a kind of beacon for the park's disproportionately high homeless aboriginal population.

But Roundhouse also has broader goals. "The concept behind the name 'Roundhouse' is a gathering place," cafe manager Al Harrington says. "In the Ojibwe and the majority of the First Nations, we have a place of gathering like a round house or a long house. I'm Ojibwe from Northwestern Ontario and back in my territory, it's where we welcome everyone and everyone is equal."

The cafe is the result of a collaboration between the Cabot Square Project, the city of Montreal, and *L'Itinéraire*, a local magazine that highlights and employs the city's homeless population.

Harrington says that serving traditional aboriginal food was a no-brainer. "Food brings people together. At first, we thought about doing salad and sandwiches, but everyone does that. I started pushing towards a more First Nations cuisine and people are starting to like that because it's different and there's nothing like that around."

For the time being, the main offerings are coffee and scone dogs. A scone dog is a hot dog wiener wrapped in *bannock*—a traditional native bread. It's quick and affordable, but also reflects First Nations culinary history.



Scone Dog and Coffee

"A lot of people enjoy the bannock here, it's a traditional First Nations bread. We got it from when the Europeans came here and gave us flour, and we integrated into our food. Our secret ingredient is maple syrup in the bread. At first, we used sugar before but maple syrup is more natural," Harrington says.

But in a slight break with tradition, it's also baked instead of fried. "Diabetes is still on the rise in First Nations. And that's because of our diet, which has changed so much in

the last 30 years—a lot of fast food. And we wanted something that a little more health conscious.”



While I was eating my scone dog, Al tells me that I should speak to a woman named Cheryl who had just contributed to the cafe’s “Pay it forward” program, which allows customers to leave extra cash so that those in need can eat or have coffee at the café. Cheryl used to live in the park.

“From 1990 to 1993, I was a street kid. And this park was kind of was a hub for us and we mixed in with the Native community at that time. They used to call it ‘Drunk Park’ or ‘Pigeon Park.’ It was mostly Native and Inuit and a few street kids like myself kind of mixed in. It was dirty, it was scary, it was hard to walk through. We were getting drunk, getting stoned in the park, but it was also still kind of a haven for us.”

Cheryl has long since gotten off the streets but the park remains important to her and a safe haven for many aboriginal people in the city.

“When they closed Cabot Square for renovations last year, we thought they were going to gentrify the aboriginal population out of the park. But after I saw the Roundhouse project, I was clear that they are honoring the space and that they’re turning it around in their own way. It educates and employs people. I love it. They’re going to be the example and they’re going to be the change.”

Moments later, a visibly drunk aboriginal woman walks into the Roundhouse to make a quick phone call. Rather than get yelled at, she is offered coffee and water. Shirley Dewind says it’s not uncommon for local homeless people to stop in if they need something.



“Sometimes they come here, we give them water, they can use the phone, and we can give them coffee with the Pay it Forward program. It’s just to help out, to sober up. If you’re waking up with a hangover, you’re going to need a really good coffee.”

And the coffee is really good. It’s bitter and aromatic and roasted on the Kanesatake Indian Reserve by a company called Moccasin Jo’s which made it a natural fit for Roundhouse. “Moccasin Jo’s coffee is from Kanesatake. We want it to have that First Nations feel to it. People like it because it’s not one of those huge distributors,” Harrington says.

Roundhouse is also hoping to extend its menu beyond coffee and scone dogs. “We’re hoping to do Three Sisters Soup, which is a traditional First Nations stew with squash, beans and potatoes. We’d also like to do deer sausage, moose, and wild game. People are starting to come here and becoming regulars and they want to try different things.”



Food aside, Harrington says that working at the cafe is a chance not only to set an example, but to really impact his community. “At one time in my life, I almost hit rock bottom but people around me gave me the benefit of the doubt, helped me as much as they could, and that turned my life right around.”

Thanks to her job at Roundhouse, Shirley has been able to save up enough money to travel back home to Winnipeg.

“I just like serving coffee and making people happy. And they can come back and appreciate my happiness.”

Direct Link: <http://munchies.vice.com/articles/how-aboriginal-food-and-coffee-are-reshaping-one-of-montreals-roughest-parks>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

TransCanada reports First Nations pipeline protestors to RCMP

by [Alicia Bridges - Smithers Interior News](#)

posted Aug 28, 2015 at 1:20 PM

TransCanada reported pipeline activists to the RCMP today after a convoy of their workers were refused access to Wet'suwet'en land by members of a Unist'ot'en clan blockade.

Four vehicles carrying Coastal GasLink Pipeline Project workers were turned away at a checkpoint on Chisholm Road south of Houston about 11 a.m. this morning.

The checkpoint is one of two camps blocking pipeline proponents from accessing the traditional territory of the Unis'tot'en clan, which is part of the Wet'suwet'en Nation.

The TransCanada Coastal GasLink Pipeline was originally routed to cross about 1km south of the Unist'ot'en Camp on its way from north-east B.C. to an LNG processing facility in Kitimat.

The company is considering an alternate route about 5km north of the camp but both of the proposed routes cross Unist'ot'en territory.

Unist'ot'en member Freda Huson said her clan had a legal right to block access to its traditional territory, citing the 1997 Delgamuukw decision in which the Supreme Court of Canada determined that aboriginal title did exist.

“We just keep telling the same thing, you do not have consent because according even to all laws they must gain consent and have meaning[ful] consultation with my clan and they haven't done that,” she said.

“We are not doing this because we want money we are doing this because we want our land.

“We don't want our lands impacted by these projects.”

Coastal GasLink project planning and execution director Greg Cano said his workers were attempting to carry out environmental fieldwork for the proposed alternate route when they were turned away.

“This environmental fieldwork is necessary so that cultural and historical resources are identified, respected and protected, and so that the project can be designed, constructed and operated in a safe and environmentally responsible manner,” said Cano.

He said his company had made more than 90 attempts to contact hereditary chief Knedebeas of the Dark House, an Unist'ot'en house which operates the checkpoint where the workers were stopped.

“They have simply refused to discuss the project, even though they have a legal obligation to do so,” said Cano.

“As a result, we have unfortunately to date been unable to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution to accessing the Dark House territory.”

Huson said her chief would not negotiate with TransCanada after a bad experience with the company.

Today's encounter was one of several between Coastal GasLink workers and members of the Unist'ot'en clan.

TransCanada said it contacted the police because it had been denied the ability to use a public road.

RCMP media relations officer Corporal Janelle Shoihet said police remained impartial in the ongoing dispute.

“Our efforts all along have been in keeping the peace, negotiations, and bringing the affected parties to the table for a fruitful discussion in the hopes of coming to a resolution,” said Shoihet.

“We will continue to work with all stakeholders and provide assistance as necessary in maintaining peace and keeping everyone safe.”

Both Cano and Huson said they planned to approach future encounters in a “peaceful” manner.

Direct Link: http://www.interior-news.com/breaking_news/323164841.html

Catholic Church, province sued over sexual assault allegations on Métis students

The plaintiffs' counsel says the case is the first of its kind in Manitoba, expects to see more victims

[CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 01, 2015 3:47 PM CT Last Updated: Sep 02, 2015 9:19 AM CT



Israel Ludwig represents the two claimants in the case being brought against the province and the Catholic Church. (Radio-Canada)

Two former Métis students of schools over which the Manitoba government had jurisdiction are suing the Winnipeg archdiocese, the Sisters of Notre Dame des Mission and the province over alleged sexual abuse.

The lawsuit outlines allegations that date back more than 50 years, naming two priests and a nun, all now deceased, as the perpetrators.

The plaintiffs' counsel, Israel Ludwig, hopes to settle the case outside the courtroom.

"What I would like to see is something that's non-adversarial. These people that suffered abuse are very sensitive people. They are fragile," Ludwig told CBC News.

"One of the things that personally bothers me when I take these cases forward is seeing my clients being re-abused by having to go through the process of telling their story and being subjected to some very tough questions."

Ludwig said the case is the first to be filed in Manitoba on behalf of Métis students who attended provincially-regulated schools. He said it could lead to many more victims coming forward.

Testing the waters

The Manitoba Métis Federation has reached out to Ludwig to be the go-to attorney the organization recommends to others with similar complaints of alleged abuse.

"Some people were fortunate enough to get help in the day. Unfortunately, that's a very small percentage of the people," said Andrew Carrier, an MMF board member. "A lot of people have a lot of hurt and anguish inside, and this is an opportunity for them to deal with that hurt and, secondly, seek the proper help that they need."

The organization is hoping the case will persuade other victims to come forward, which they estimate ranges between 500 and 1,000 individuals. To date, MMF has received more than 70 definitive complaints, 30 of which have opened a file with Ludwig.

The organization's goal is to seek a settlement with the province similar to that which the federal government reached with victims of residential schools.

In September 2007, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement came into effect to culminate the largest class-action lawsuit in the country to date. The agreement established a multi-billion-dollar fund to help in the recovery of victims of Canada's residential schools.

"MMF's primary interest is that these people be heard and that they have a venue to file a claim appropriately for compensation and other programs that may be available," Carrier said.

The Archdiocese of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba have refused to comment to CBC News on the lawsuit.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/catholic-church-province-sued-over-sexual-assault-allegations-on-m%C3%A9tis-students-1.3211662>

Morin faction found not in contempt

By Betty Ann Adam, The StarPhoenix September 2, 2015



Gerald Morin, Vice President of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan.

Gerald Morin and the Provincial Metis Council (PMC) were not in contempt of court when they failed to hold a provincewide courtordered meeting, a Queen's Bench justice has found.

Justice Brian Scherman denied the application brought by Metis Nation - Saskatchewan (MNS) president Robert Doucette against vice-president Gerald Morin and the majority of the PMC in a 31-page decision this week. A protracted ongoing court battle between the two factions "surely dishonours the memory of Riel, Dumont and all their compatriots," Scherman wrote.

The organization lost its \$400,000 annual funding last October for failing to hold the twice-yearly Metis Nation Legislative Assemblies (MNLA). Its activities were shut down and staff laid off.

Doucette failed to prove his political foes deliberately or recklessly ignored the April order that it meet and schedule an MNLA to be held in mid-June, Scherman found.

Instead, he found Morin had provided evidence that he and the PMC had made efforts to comply with the order. When they realized on May 1 that there wasn't enough money to hold the \$130,000 meeting, they turned their efforts to finding financing to hold it, he found.

Doucette failed to cooperate with Morin's and the PMC's efforts to meet to plan the assembly, saying there wasn't enough money to gather in person, and he twice failed to attend out-of-town meetings that were paid for by the Metis National Council, Scherman found.

"The prima facie conclusion I am left with is that he and his faction were boycotting this meeting to avoid the face-to-face meeting the majority wanted.

"This failure supports the respondents' position that Robert Doucette was acting actively and/or passively to frustrate the ability of the majority of PMC to act," Scherman wrote.

Morin and the PMC could have scheduled the MNLA as ordered but "In a very real

sense, it was more important that they take concrete steps to ensure that an MNLA could, in fact, happen," Scherman wrote. "It was not unreasonable for them to conclude that it was impossible to comply with my order without funding being in place and to focus their efforts on seeking funding."

JUDGE CENSURES LEADERS

Queen's Bench Justice Brian Scherman began a 31-page decision with a scathing criticism of the parties involved. Scherman ruled this week against a contempt of court application brought by Metis Nation - Saskatchewan president Robert Doucette against vice-president Gerald Morin and the majority of the Provincial Metis Council.

"It has come to this. Metis battling Metis, each in the name and for the purported good of Metis Nation-Saskatchewan (MNS). Today's Metis battles do not pit muskets, Sharp and Winchester rifles against government troops, military carbines and Gatling guns. Instead, the field of battle consists of partisan politicking and strategic posturing reinforced with court proceedings, Metis against Metis," Scherman wrote. "The weapons of choice are injunction applications and contempt proceedings. To some, this may seem civilized compared to the battles of 1885. The veneer of civility is thin.

"That this should be happening in the land of Batoche, the cultural and aspirational centre of the Metis people's struggles, surely dishonours the memory of Riel, Dumont and all their compatriots. "Today's Metis wars have their genesis in political struggles to control MNS. The factions each claim the MNS Constitution and the path of righteousness are on their side. Communications between the warring Doucette and Morin factions routinely cite constitutional responsibilities and close with words of 'thanks' to the other and the phrase, 'God bless you and your family.' These words mask less cooperative sentiments."

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/Morin+faction+found+contempt/11334247/story.html>

Homeless Inuit abused by Montreal police, photographer alleges

Police appoint aboriginal liaison officer to improve relationship

By John Van Dusen, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 04, 2015 3:00 AM CT Last Updated: Sep 04, 2015 8:52 AM CT



American photographer Michael Morris spent the summer in Montreal documenting the city's homeless aboriginal population. (Michael Morris)

When Michael Morris was visiting Montreal this summer to photograph a graffiti festival, his focus turned to the city's homeless population. In particular, the city's homeless Inuit population.

Morris honed in on an area around the Cinema du Parc complex.

"I would see them getting off of buses, off of police buses in the morning," he said.



Morris spent time around the Cinema du Parc complex in Montreal, taking photos of the homeless.

"Anytime they would try to sit down, security would start harassing them.

"Police would hog-tie them in chains, beat them up, knock them out, choke hold them, all those different things. And just basically abused them," he alleged.

At one point he said he saw officers arresting a drunk man.

"I think it was pretty shocking to see 12 cops at one point on one drunk Inuit."

Police declined to comment on allegations by Morris, but said if anyone witnesses police abuse, they should contact the Montreal police ethics commission.

"If these abuses are really taking place, we want to know about it so we can make it stop," said Sgt. Laurent Gingras, a spokesperson for Montreal police.



Morris alleges a number of civil rights abuses by Montreal's police against the city's homeless. (Michael Morris)

Rachel Deutsch says she's familiar with these stories. She manages cultural programming at [Cabot Square Park, a popular hangout for Montreal's Inuit.](#)

"We often do hear really difficult stories in terms of their interactions with police," she said. "I definitely heard of some stories of violence and aggression."

"We also know that the Inuit population is really over-represented in the homeless population."

[A survey of Montreal's homeless earlier this year](#) counted more than 3,000. About 10 per cent were aboriginal.

Deutsch describes the relationship with police as tense, with trust being the major obstacle.

"They need to have trust in the police," she said. "And right now that's not always happening. Actually, it's rarely happening because there's not a lot of trust in police."

It's something the police in Montreal are working to improve.

"The Inuit community are the most vulnerable, the ones that need the most help," said Carlo DeAngelis, the police's newly-appointed aboriginal liaison officer.

In June, then-police chief Marc Parent [signed an agreement with the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy NETWORK](#) to create DeAngelis' position to work with the community, add cultural training and establish an aboriginal committee within the police force.

"No matter what the organization, there's always room for improvement," DeAngelis said.

"But if you look at the overall relationship, I think everything's going in the right direction."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-montreal-police-homeless-1.3214131>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Inuit youth set a course for future under new leader

"Disappointment has turned into determination to try to address some of the intergenerational affects of our history"

LISA GREGOIRE, August 28, 2015 - 11:49 am



Mataalii, president of the National Inuit Youth Council, says the Aug. 20-24 youth summit in Iqaluit was rich in debate and inspiration. (PHOTO COURTESY NIYC FACEBOOK)



About 70 youth from across Inuit Nunangat, and a few from Greenland, met in Iqaluit for five days recently to discuss everything from suicide prevention to an Inuit university. (PHOTO COURTESY INUIT TAPIRIIT KANATAMI)

After five days of debating issues, sharing stories, reconnecting with elders, and lamenting about colonial influences, the decline of Inuktitut and the lack of a northern university, it's time now to put those thoughts into action, says Maatalii Okalik.

Okalik, the [newly-elected president](#) of the National Inuit Youth Council, took a break from attending the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami language summit in Iqaluit Aug. 26 to offer her thoughts on what the NIYC will be working in the coming months and years.

And while that list of items might be long and the social and historical obstacles challenging, Okalik said the impression she got from youth at the recent Iqaluit summit was: bring it on.

“There was definitely some disappointment shared by the delegation, but what was uplifting was the fact that the disappointment has turned into determination to try to address some of the intergenerational affects of our history,” said Okalik.

“There was a common feeling among the delegation to use that determination to challenge current systems and explore how, as Inuit youth venturing in their journeys of education and employment, can right the wrongs of that history.”

About 70 youth from across Inuit Nunangat, including a small delegation from Greenland, attended the Aug. 20 to Aug. 24 gathering at Inuksuk High School which

included workshops, a trip out to Sylvia Grinnell Territorial Park to eat country foods brought by Nunavik delegates and even a talent show.

But they also covered difficult subjects like suicide prevention, Okalik said, as well as culture and language loss and how that impairs relationships between youth and their elders.

According to the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, as of July 2014, the territory's population stood at 36,585.

Of those, almost exactly half were 24 years old or younger. And 37 per cent are between the ages of five and 24.

Makivik Corp. reports that 60 per cent of Nunavik's population is under age 30 — twice the percentage that age in southern Quebec.

So when Inuit leaders talk about the importance of youth issues and getting youth involved in business, education policy, politics and social issues, it's because there are a huge number of young people who are taking over leadership of Inuit Nunangat.

But to do that, Inuit youth often have to leave their homeland, Okalik said, to get better educated, to get healthy or to get jobs.

For that reason, she's hoping to expand the current mandate of the NIYC so it can also represent the many Inuit youth living in Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg and St. John's — those raised in cities and those who are temporarily located there.

Okalik, who grew up in Ottawa, knows about that urban Inuit world.

She also talked about ways to keep more Inuit in the northern territories and one way, she said, would be to establish an Arctic university in Canada.

Not only would more Inuit go to university, she said, it's likely more Inuit would be motivated to graduate from high school since the idea of university would no longer seem so daunting and remote.

The Government of Nunavut announced in June that it will conduct a feasibility study for a university to be located in Nunavut. They already have a \$5-million donation from the chair of Agnico Eagle Mines.

And before that, in March, a group of academics and public policy makers gathered in Iqaluit to talk what would be needed to build a university in northern Canada.

They released a report which you can read at the bottom of the story [here](#).

As Okalik pointed out, much has to happen before a university is ever built in Nunavut, but she said the NIYC supports the efforts of governments, academics and the private sector in this regard.

“I understand that there are a number of stakeholders that are part of the conversation and we do understand it’s still in the exploration process,” Okalik said.

“However we are in support of that exploration, to one day see a university in the circumpolar world specific to Canada.”

But throughout the youth summit, it was language and culture loss that seemed to come up again and again. Okalik said it’s obvious youth feel strongly about these issues and it’s one reason why she attended the ITK language summit in Iqaluit this week.

“Even Inuit youth who are raised in Inuit Nunangat, there is a trend of language decline and that is problematic because we identify language to be an integral part of our culture,” she said.

“In order to strengthen our identities and to lead meaningful lives reflective of our culture and to ensure we’re working for the best interest of our people, we want to ensure language revitalization, retention and promotion. That’s definitely one of our priorities at the council.”

Okalik said the seven-member NIYC — created in 1993 when ITK was known as the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada — will soon debrief from the summit to set an agenda for the organization and make note of any possible improvements for the next national youth summit, scheduled for 2017.

She encouraged Inuit youth to make their opinions and suggestions known to the NIYC through its [website](#) and through social media avenues such as [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).

She also encouraged Inuit youth to contribute stories and artwork to their magazine, Nipiit. You can see copies of the magazine [here](#).

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_youth_set_a_course_for_future_under_new_leader/

First Nations University of Canada budget deficit leads to layoffs

By Kerry Benjoe, The Leader-Post August 28, 2015



The new semester at First Nations University of Canada will be wrought with many changes.

The new semester at First Nations University of Canada will be wrought with many changes.

Not only is the Regina campus going through a renovation, but the Regina and Prince Albert campuses will also say goodbye to some of their staff members, Lynn Wells, FNUUniv VP of academics, said budgetary constraints have resulted in staff layoffs.

"In total there are nine staff members impacted," she said. "What we did is we tried to minimize the impact in any area, so the layoffs were spread over a number of administrative and academic units."

She said staff fluctuates at the institution, and before the layoffs there were about 100 employees in total between the Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert campuses. "We have many, many more staff that are on casual and on an interim basis," said Wells.

The primary goal of these layoffs was to minimize the impact on FNUUniv's student body.

According to FNUUniv's financial statements available online, the university is currently running a deficit of \$801,527.

"That deficit, and it's certainly only a one-time situation, arose because our tuition revenue turned out to be a bit lower than we had expected," said Wells. "We were anticipating a certain growth in our enrolment last year and while our enrolments did grow, they did not grow quite as much as we had anticipated."

She said the university is doing all that is necessary to recover from the deficit as soon as possible, and recent renovations to the Regina campus building are a part of that recovery process.

"We are expanding into the top floors of our building, and our reason for doing that is to increase our classroom and student support spaces so that we can increase enrolment, which will be good for the bottom line at the university going forward," said Wells. "We are committed to grow the university and to serve ... First Nations and other students."

Two years ago, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Affairs Canada informed FNUniv of its intent to move out of the Regina campus building. When it moved out, it meant the loss of \$1.4 million a year in revenue for the institution.

Wells insists the loss of that revenue has nothing to do with the current deficit.

"Our budget projections for the past few years have already taken into account that shift in that revenue," she said.

Wells also said the current renovations are being completed at minimal cost, but the end result means the entire building will be able to generate much-needed revenue.

Wells said there will likely be no further layoffs and that the deficit will not affect its ability to operate, or impact its relationship with the University of Regina.

She said FNUniv will continue to track its enrolment and remains hopeful the institution will see a fair amount of growth this fall and into the future.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/business/First+Nations+University+Canada+budget+deficit+leaves+layoffs/11323510/story.html>

Aboriginal perspectives help shape new B.C. school curriculum

Lessons on historical discrimination added in response to Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings

By Tracy Sherlock, Vancouver Sun August 29, 2015



Author Nicola Campbell reads from her book *Shi-shi-etko*, a resource being used at the Grade 5 level.

With the new curriculum comes one notable and significant shift: There is a new focus on aboriginal learning.

Not only will students in B.C. be learning about the history of residential schools, starting in Grade 5, but they will also have aboriginal perspectives embedded into all parts of the curriculum in what the government hopes will be a meaningful and authentic manner.

Some have questioned why B.C. schools would focus on aboriginal culture and not that of other ethnic groups.

“The knowledge, the literature and the language from where other people in the province have come from still exists, still grows and still flourishes in other parts of the world,” said Jo-Anne Chrona, curriculum co-ordinator for the First Nations Education Steering Committee. “This is the only place in the world that holds this knowledge. ... If it’s not taught and learned here, it will not be taught anywhere else.”

In the specific lessons about B.C.’s history, topics will include discrimination, inequality, oppression and the impacts of colonialism. The changes are part of the B.C. government’s response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s report on the residential school system.

The aboriginal perspectives embedded into the rest of the curriculum are based on the First Peoples Principles of Learning, which include ideas like “Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions,” and “Learning requires exploration of one’s identity.”

These principles were first written down and articulated by a group of aboriginal advisers and educators in 2006 when they were creating a new English 12 course based on First Nations, Chrona said.

All of the First Peoples Principles of Learning were considered by the teams creating the new curriculum, and each team had aboriginal representation, according to the ministry of education. One professional development day this school year will focus on aboriginal education, Chrona said.

It might be difficult to imagine how math, for example, could have learning about First Nations embedded into its curriculum. But Chrona says building a canoe is a good example of how to think about it.

“In math, we advocate for ... connecting it to the world around you,” Chrona said. “Math ability has always been important for First Peoples. There are some fantastic resources out of Haida Gwaii that show how math was embedded in the creation of a canoe. ... (There are) these amazing artisans that create these things ... like someone who could take a piece of material and create a miniature, scale model of what the canoe would look like later.”

And while it might not be such a stretch to imagine integrating First Nations literature into the English curriculum, Coquitlam teacher Tara Elie said some teachers are concerned about how to find authentic aboriginal material to use in their classrooms.

Chrona said the First Nations Education Steering Committee will have full resource guides available for teachers for both the specific units on residential schools and across other curricular areas. The guides are available on the committee's website and include annotated lists of reading materials and other resources.

"I've been in education for 18 years. ... I'm feeling and seeing something different now. I'm seeing so much more receptivity and excitement about the integration of First Peoples' content and people recognizing that this is an important part of who we are as a country. And that's exciting. It didn't exist 10 years ago for sure, and I didn't see it here five years ago either."

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/metro/Aboriginal+perspectives+help+shape+school+curriculum/11325550/story.html#ixzz3kQQaGOoE>

Changes in First Nations history in public schools is "long overdue": BC Chief

by [Joanne Abshire](#)

Posted Sep 1, 2015 11:34 pm PDT

Last Updated Sep 1, 2015 at 11:47 pm PDT



Union of BC Chiefs executive says First Nations curriculum changes to public education is long overdue

VANCOUVER (NEWS1130) – Students could start learning about residential schools this year thanks to upcoming changes in BC’s public education. Aboriginal perspectives will be offered at all grade levels from kindergarten to grade 9 and teachers have the option of using the new program this year instead of waiting until 2016.

One Executive member of the [Union of BC Indian Chiefs](#) says it’s about time. “Well, it’s long overdue for sure being in the school curriculum for recognizing indigenous people and the plight here in Canada for our people,” says Chief Judy Wilson with the Neskonlith First Nations and the UBCIC.

She’s glad students will hear what really happened during the settlement of lands, creation of reserves, residential schools, and the dependency created. “So, now we can learn the impacts to our people and also how our people are rebuilding their nations and rebuilding and strengthening their families in order to heal our people. I’m looking forward to our children learning about indigenous people because when I went to school, we didn’t learn about our people, it was the Plains Indians or the Inuit or everybody else,” she explains.

She does feel more can be done. “[Teachers can] also lend that [curriculum to] adult schools, I think it’s just the start of the real information of indigenous people getting out to the schools now.”

She’s also happy there were members of the Aboriginal community contributed to the curriculum.

Direct Link: <http://www.news1130.com/2015/09/01/changes-in-first-nations-history-in-public-schools-is-long-overdue-bc-chief/>

CFS seizes a Manitoba newborn a day, First Nations advocate says

By Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press Posted: Sep 01, 2015 12:10 PM CT Last Updated: Sep 01, 2015 2:09 PM CT



Cora Morgan, Manitoba's First Nations family advocate, says the province is seizing a record number of children rather than providing help to parents who need support. (Photo courtesy of LinkedIn)

The children's advocate for Manitoba's First Nations says social workers are seizing an average of one newborn baby a day and "shoving them anywhere."

Cora Morgan told The Canadian Press that she was with a mother in hospital on Monday when Child and Family Services took the woman's three-day-old son. The only reason given was that the mother had been a ward of family services until she was 18, Morgan said.

"It was heart-wrenching," she said. "It just seemed so utterly heartless."

Manitoba is seizing a record number of newborns — as many as 40 a month from one downtown hospital — rather than supporting parents, Morgan said. The infants are being taken into care without any assessment of the parents or their ability to care for the child, she said.

"The taps of apprehension are on high and the bathtub was full five years ago, so they have kids spilling out all over the place. They're prepared to shove them anywhere."

Manitoba has one of the highest apprehension rates in Canada, said Morgan, who added the seizures are as damaging as Indian residential schools. The longer a child is in care, the more complex the child's needs become, she said.

"In this system, you are guilty until you can prove you're innocent. They're not going in and investigating to see if there is another side of the story. They're not going in there to say, 'How can we help you?' ... They just take the kids."

The province recently became the first in Canada to apologize for systematically apprehending aboriginal children starting in the 1960s and placing them with non-aboriginal families — a practice known as the '60s Scoop.

"They're still taking children. How can they not want to address what they're doing right now?"

Manitoba has more than 10,000 children in care. The system has been under scrutiny for years following several high-profile deaths and assaults.

Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross earlier this year promised to stop using hotels to house young wards after a girl was seriously assaulted. Both the victim and the youth charged were in government care at a downtown Winnipeg hotel.

Child welfare came under intense pressure a year ago when 15-year-old Tina Fontaine was killed after running away from a hotel where she was in government care. The teen's body was found wrapped in a bag in the Red River.

Premier Greg Selinger said the province is shifting towards prevention programs and, in some First Nations communities, they appear to be working. Caseloads this year have been virtually stagnant while the province looks at how to funnel more funding toward prevention, he said.

The aim is to keep kids out of care. If babies are apprehended, workers try to "get them back home as quickly as possible," the premier said.

Ian Wishart, a critic with the Opposition Conservatives, said it has become Manitoba's policy to apprehend babies first and ask questions about the parents' fitness later.

"Once a child is apprehended, it's at least three months until you get it back. It can be as long as six, even if you are in a position of strength," he said.

"That's a critical time for the attachment between a child and the mother. You are interfering with that attachment."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/cfs-seizes-a-manitoba-newborn-a-day-first-nations-advocate-says-1.3211451>

Aboriginal Health

Some Inuit may be refusing cancer treatment, study indicates

30% of Baffin region patients diagnosed 2000-2010 not referred to Ottawa cancer centre, say researchers

By Natasha MacDonald-Dupuis, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 28, 2015 4:00 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 28, 2015 7:05 AM CT



Ely Panipakoocho, a cancer patient from Pond Inlet, Nunavut, has been receiving chemotherapy treatments at the the Ottawa Hospital Cancer Centre for almost two years, thousands of kilometres from his home community. (Submitted by Ely Panipakoocho)

Thirty per cent of Inuit cancer patients from Baffin Island over a 10-year period weren't referred for chemotherapy or radiation treatment at an Ottawa cancer centre, according to a new study.

As Nunavut has no cancer treatment centre, patients are sent to southern cities. Most patients from the Baffin region are sent to the Ottawa Hospital Cancer Centre.

Researchers at the Ottawa Hospital Cancer Centre did a chart review of all referrals to the centre between Jan. 1, 2000, and Dec. 31, 2010. The data were then cross-referenced with the cancer cases recorded in the Nunavut cancer registry.

Dr. Tim Asmis, a co-author of the study, says the 30 per cent statistic is somewhat comparable to a few other regions in Canada.

"One explanation would be that they could have had their cancer at an early stage that was dealt with surgically," he said.



Dr. Tim Asmis, from the Ottawa Hospital Cancer Centre, says geographic remoteness could influence treatment choices. (CBC)

Another explanation, according to Asmis, is some Inuit might have refused treatment.

"The distance they have to travel is enormous — they have to fly over 2,000 kilometres to Ottawa — and oftentimes will have to stay there for a number of weeks," he said.

Those who do choose to travel south for treatment may face emotional and financial stress.

"My family was visiting me down here for holidays, but they ran out of vacations, so now it's just me and my wife," said Ely Panipakoocho, a cancer patient from Pond Inlet who is receiving treatment in Ottawa.

"I have to get injections that cannot be treated in the North, and had to use my insurance rather than my health-care plan to pay for that. It's cost me over \$1,000."

The study also found that in cases of lung and colorectal cancer, Inuit women were more than twice as likely to get referred for treatment as men.

"We don't know why that is," said Asmis.

"Maybe they're not seeing their doctors regularly, aren't undergoing cancer screening or maybe they are choosing not to be referred. Those are questions we need to look into, because there is no gender discrimination between the cancers that are most common in Nunavut — lung cancer and colorectal cancer."

He said another factor could be the lack of cancer resources in Inuktitut may make it difficult for Inuit to make an informed decision about treatment.

He said the Ottawa hospital hopes to offer more information and services in Inuktitut.

"We're working on improving Telemedicine, and recently there was a CT scanner placed in Nunavut, where patients will be able to undergo cancer staging and assessments," said Asmis.

"But we need to work closely with the government of Nunavut to develop more cancer prevention strategies."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/some-inuit-may-be-refusing-cancer-treatment-study-indicates-1.3206509>

Health clinics reach out to aboriginal women

By Chuck Chiang, Vancouver Sun August 28, 2015

First Nations women facing health issues in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside now have a new, unconventional option for help: traditional Chinese medicine.

Tzu Chi Canada, the local branch of the Buddhist non-profit based in Taiwan, opened the first clinic focusing on the First Nations community about two years ago. Officials this week said the response has been so positive that two more Downtown Eastside locations are now operating, and doctors with the program will visit the Sumas First Nation in Abbotsford next month to provide community health consultations.

Gary Ho, CEO of Tzu Chi Canada, said while the group has been engaged in charitable activities in B.C. for more than two decades, the recent popularity of traditional Chinese medicinal practices such as acupuncture and reflexology has been a surprise.

“We are a donor to the Aboriginal Mother Centre, and we were touring their facilities a few years ago when they said they had a western doctor come in for a clinic once a week,” Ho said. “And I thought, ‘Why don’t we have traditional Chinese medical practitioners here, as well?’ We started about two years ago, and the response ... has been very good.”

Tzu Chi now holds monthly workshops at the downtown Vancouver Public Library, drawing up to 80 attendees. Two other local libraries will begin hosting similar workshops this year.

But a permanent clinic remains elusive, although Ho said discussions are underway with other groups. Tzu Chi also owns a parcel of land in the South Cambie area of Vancouver, and applications to re-zone it are underway.

Ho said that while Tzu Chi’s active promotion of Chinese medicine has helped increase its acceptance in the Lower Mainland, recent changes in health care priorities may be the biggest contributor to its popularity.

“This is not something we can do ourselves,” he said. “The general health trend in the world is now moving toward preventive health care, and that’s something that Chinese traditional medicine is very strong in. People now realize that (most) of their health depends on their individual habits.”

Another venue where Tzu Chi has promoted Chinese medicine is the annual TaiwanFest in Vancouver each summer, where consultation clinics have been held for the last three years.

Ho said he anticipates that acceptance of Chinese medicine will continue to grow in the coming years.

There are still many questions about Chinese medicine, and it is currently not covered by B.C.’s Medical Services Plan. Ho says that puts the onus to the doctors and academics in the field to provide more research and certification to ensure public confidence. He added that, while the treatments are not for everyone, it has proven especially effective in dealing with chronic bone and muscle pain, as well as digestive disorders.

“Our mission is to tell people that they can live much healthier,” Ho said. “We are trying to reinforce that message. And with Chinese medicine, sometimes, just moving your hands and doing little exercises during your work day can resolve many health issues.”

Currently, Tzu Chi operates three First Nation clinics at which doctors hold eight-hour sessions once a week. Doctors usually spend close to 45 minutes with each patient, Ho said.

A one-day session at the Sumas First Nation will be held on Sept. 19.

Tzu Chi has been actively promoting health-related charitable work in the Lower Mainland since 1992.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/health/Health+clinics+reach+aboriginal+women/11325234/story.html>

Ktunaxa Nation, Métis Nation BC Sign Health Protocol Agreement



Left to right: Codie Morigeau, Debbie Whitehead, Marilyn Taylor, Annette Maurice signed the Health Protocol Agreement that calls for increased planning and access to health services for Métis and all Aboriginal people residing in Ktunaxa territory.

posted Sep 2, 2015 at 8:33 AM

For the Townsman

The Ktunaxa Nation and the Métis Nation British Columbia have signed a Health Protocol Agreement that calls for increased planning and access to health services for Métis and all Aboriginal people residing in Ktunaxa territory.

"We are proud to sign this document with the Métis today," said Debbie Whitehead, Ktunaxa Nation Council Social Sector Director. "This agreement will ensure that any and all health services, from the planning stage to the provisioning stage, will include input from Métis and all Aboriginal people in Ktunaxa territory."

"I believe that by making our planning processes as inclusive as possible, this inclusiveness will be reflected through better health outcomes for Métis, Ktunaxa and all Aboriginal people," continued Whitehead.

The Health Protocol Agreement was signed by Debbie Whitehead, Ktunaxa Nation Council Social Sector Chair Codie Morigeau, Métis Nation British Columbia Regional Director for the Kootenays Marilyn Taylor and Métis Nation British Columbia Minister responsible for Health, Vice-President Annette Maurice at a ceremony at the Ktunaxa Nation Government Building on August 31.

Direct Link: http://www.dailytownsman.com/breaking_news/323895491.html

Aboriginal History

Aug. 28, 1917: First Inuit tried in Dominion court not hanged for missionary murders

By Chris Zdeb, Edmonton Journal August 28, 2015



Uluksuk, left, and Sinnisiak were the first Inuit to be tried in a Dominion (Canadian) court in Edmonton in 1917.

What was commonly known as the “Eskimo murder trial” ended with two Copper Inuit relieved they would not be hanged for killing two missionary priests.

It brought to a close a four-year-old case that involved a clash of cultures, cannibalism, political interference and a change of venue to Calgary after the first man tried was found not guilty of killing one of the priests by an Edmonton jury. In Calgary, they were both convicted of the second murder, but because the killings had been provoked, the jurors “strongly recommended mercy.”

Speaking through an interpreter, the chief justice of Alberta told the two men, Sinnisiak and Uluksuk, that “big chief far away,” (the federal justice minister in Ottawa) had decided that “because they didn’t know our way, he won’t have them put to death for killing those men this time. They must understand, now they know our law, that if they ever kill again they must suffer.”

The men’s sentences were commuted to life in prison.

When they were charged with the deaths of Father Jean-Baptiste Rouviere and Father Guillaume Le Roux at Bloody Falls, on the fringe of the Arctic Ocean, 3,540 km north of Edmonton, it was the first time Inuits faced white man’s justice in a Dominion courtroom.

Crowds of curious spectators came to see “these representatives of a prehistoric race,” clothed in caribou skin trimmed with white rabbit fur, the Journal reported.

Court heard Sinnisiak had confessed he and Uluksuk killed the Oblate missionaries who arrived in their village in the winter of 1913 to convert Inuit to Roman Catholicism.

The two Inuit were heading out to hunt when they encountered the priests, who promised them some traps if the Inuit would help the priests’ dogs pull their sled. The Inuit did so for a day before leaving.

With little food and only one dog, the Inuit came across a cache of food that turned out to belong to the Oblates. The priests found the men at the cache and told them to again pull their sled in spite of the Inuits’ protestations. Le Roux continually threatened them with a rifle. Sinnisiak believed the priests meant to kill them and decided to strike first, stabbing Le Roux in the back. They then ate Le Roux’s liver, a custom to ensure the priest would not come back to life.

When Sinnisiak was found not guilty, there was speculation Uluksuk might not be tried. The two Inuit were jointly charged with Le Roux’s murder and the trial moved to Calgary.

Sinnisiak and Uluksuk were eventually “jailed” at the police detachment in Fort Resolution where they were not confined but did odd jobs around the post. They were released in May 1919.

Uluksuk died in 1924. Sinnisiak died six years later.

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/1917+First+Inuit+tried+Dominion+court+hanged+missionary+murders/11322351/story.html>

Revisiting Métis history along the Athabasca River

By [Cullen Bird](#), Today staff

Thursday, August 27, 2015 6:17:16 MDT PM



Canoes beached on the shore at Poplar Point on the Athabasca River, one of the stops on the McMurray Métis 1935 Local's second annual canoe trip, on Aug. 18, 2015. Cullen Bird/Fort McMurray Today/Postmedia Network.

Sitting by the fire with his cousin Dave Waniandy, Bill Loutitt told me the importance of the McMurray Métis canoe trip down the Athabasca River from Fort McKay to Fort Chipewyan.

“The big thing that I see is, the relationships you’re building with other nations, whether it’s

Mikisew Cree, or [Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation], or the Métis, or the non-Aboriginal people,” he said.

Most of the people on the trip are those who already know the river, or live nearby, he acknowledged.

“But there are never very many opportunities for doing it as a group,” he said.

This is the second year the McMurray Métis have held the canoe trip. It’s a voyage of historical and cultural significance, stopping at a number of important sites.

The McMurray Métis canoe expedition began late morning on Aug. 17, as nine people in five canoes left the Fort McKay boat launch and assorted well-wishers and started what would be a seven-day journey from Fort McKay to Fort Chipewyan. The members of the trip were a mix of McMurray Métis members, people who worked with the McMurray Métis, and long-time residents of the area.

Funded and organized by the McMurray Métis, we would paddle more than 200 km downstream on the Athabasca River.

We didn't have far to go the first day. A few hours after leaving, with a short break on a sand bar, our canoes reached the tarry shores and rusted remains of Bitumount, the first oilsands project in Canada.

Begun after the Second World War and shuttered in 1958, Bitumount represented the beginning of the second great industry the Athabasca River has seen. The first, of course, was the fur trade, which brought European employees of the Hudson Bay Company and the North West Company to northern Canada. The Métis are the descendants of those fur traders and the local First Nations, and Métis members like Bill Loutitt can trace their connection with the area back to the 1800s.

There is also a political rationale for the trip. In their negotiations with government and industry, the McMurray Métis frequently need to demonstrate their traditional land use. Three years ago the group produced a book of local Métis history and culture, *Mark of the Métis*, to bolster their claim to their traditional land. The trip serves as an extension of that effort.

"I want to see these areas. I want as many people [as possible] to see these areas before they're gone," Loutitt said. "Just to ensure everything's recorded. And when it comes time to develop in that area, you know areas that have got to be protected, and you give them buffer zones."

The Athabasca River forms part of the Peace-Athabasca River Delta, one of the largest inland freshwater deltas in the world. It serves as a crucial corridor for migratory birds, and nourishes myriad ponds, lakes, and smaller waterways that serve as wildlife habitat.

The Athabasca River is a highway, a gathering point, a crucial asset to industry past and present, and a link to a cultural and historical past.

Of our canoeing group, Carmen Wells, Mandy Wills, Jessica and Lucas Punko, and their aunt Mary Irla, were the members of the McMurray Métis 1935 Local. We also had a motorboat escort that would check in with us frequently, carrying Métis member Murray Cardinal, Bill Loutitt, Vice President of the local, and his cousin Dave Waniandy, Traditional Lands Specialist and Trapper Liason for the local. Our escort of elders would camp with us each night.

For the first three days, we were blessed with excellent weather. The current was a great help as well, but we were constantly at pains to avoid running aground on sandbars. The Athabasca River is at its lowest point in recorded history this year, a combination of dry weather and continuing stresses from B.C.'s hydro dams and water use by the oil sand sites. Navigating by a decades-old map from the days when the barges had travelled the Athabasca River, we tried to follow the deepest channel of the river.

On our second night we stayed at Poplar Point, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation reserve territory and site of a First Nation and Métis cemetery.

There we met ACFN hunter and trapper Roy Ladouceur, 61, who would serve as an incredibly knowledgeable guide. Ladouceur has decades of experience hunting, trapping and fishing on the land, and has lived on Poplar Point for the past 15 years.

From that point on Roy gave a steady stream of information. It was berry season, and Roy showed the group large blueberry patches, wild mint, muskeg (Labrador) tea plants, and where to find highbush cranberries.

Bad weather forced us to stay an extra day at Embarras, an old logging camp site founded and operated by Mary Irla's father, and recently bought by the Mikisew Cree Band Council. The bad weather was a reminder that nature is in charge, Roy remarked.

Irla spoke of her connection with the area, and her family's history there.

"My grandmother used to tell me a story about her mother and grandmother. When she first came to Fort [Chipewyan], her mother was 13, and they came by canoe," Irla said.

"Canoeing along here, paddling along the river, I think about those things," she said.

As the days ticked by more and more people joined the trip. On the second day at the logging camp, day five of the trip, Mikisew Cree band councillor Ronnie Campbell arrived with Sara Loutitt and their two daughters with fresh-caught fish for dinner. Local Métis member Lloyd Grant arrived on a raft he'd built himself.

On the sixth day our group had become a flotilla, with canoes, motorboats, and a raft all traveling the same way on the river.

The trip ended at Fort Chipewyan, the oldest community in Alberta. It's a former Hudson Bay Company fort established in 1788, a beautiful mix of painted wood-frame houses and buildings against the multicolored backdrop of the Canadian Shield.

At Fort Chipewyan's McMurray Aviation airstrip myself, Jessica Weber, Lucas Punko and Bill Loutitt climbed into a Cessna Caravan for the trip back. Thousands of feet in the air, the delta below passed in a swirl of pastel blues and greens. Lakes, ponds and wetlands that couldn't be seen from the river were laid out in a patchwork of water and vegetation below. We passed over ice roads, traplines, and the massive brown grids and steel structures of the oilsands projects.

The distance that took seven days to traverse by river was covered in 50 minutes by air. The Athabasca is no longer the highway it once was. Yet the people who lived, worked and were born here still have deep ties to the river, and the land it surrounds.

Direct Link: <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2015/08/27/paddling-with-the-mcmurray-metis-along-the-athabasca-river>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Major change proposed for Inuit writing

By [Marc Montgomery](#) |
Friday 28 August, 2015

For eons, the Inuit in the circumpolar world had no written language. In the 1700's missionaries introduced writing to Greenland Inuit, and later efforts spread to the Canadian Arctic and Alaska.

However, as the areas were exposed to differing missionaries at different times, a mix of writing developed, with some missionaries using the Roman characters and others using slightly varied versions of syllabics, adapted from Cree and Ojibway syllabics which in turn had been devised by missionaries using Pitman shorthand trying to interpret sounds in the language.

“Existing writing systems have been imposed on us.”.

In 1976, the Inuit Cultural Institute (ICI) developed a standardized dual writing system comprising syllabics and Roman orthography.. The dual writing system introduced new symbols for sounds that were not previously represented in the old writing systems. The reform also included “finals” and diacritics so that each letter represented one sound in the Inuit language.

However some dialects and some regions still do not use the ICI system,



Mary Simon, former ITK president, Canadian Arctic ambassador and panelist at the language summit in Iqaluit this week. In her closing remarks she described a recommendation from the summit to adopt a standardized form of written Inuktitut, based on Roman orthography. © Canadian Press

Recently there have been renewed calls for a unified system across the Canadian north, and that syllabics be changed for a new Inuit language system based on Roman orthography.

At a meeting this week in Iqaluit, Nunavut, representatives from the Inuktitut speaking areas joined the Atausiq Inuktitut Titirasiq (AIT) to discuss the issue and decided to switch to more standard Roman orthography across the Arctic.

They will recommend the switch in a draft document presented to the National Committee on Inuit Education Sept 9.

“Existing writing systems have been imposed on us. Canadian Inuit now have an opportunity to choose and create our own unified writing system,” the draft said.

“The recommendation from this summit is for jurisdictions to formally explore the implementation of an Inuit writing system rooted in a standardized form of Roman orthography that is developed by Inuit, for Inuit, and introduced through the education system.”

While some expressed concern that the new system would have a negative effect on unique regional dialects, but delegates said syllabics could continue to be taught in higher grades in those regions where syllabics have traditionally been used.

The unified written language proposal would see a new writing style of Roman lettering beginning in kindergarten and then moving up through the education system.

The group noted that a new system would simplify communication and promote Inuit culture in the digital medium.

Representatives from Greenland said the practicality of Greenland Inuktitut and the digital world comes from its use of the Roman alphabet, which enables easy transliteration of Greenland Inuktitut into the English language and vice versa.

Former president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Canada’s national Inuit organization.

Direct Link: <http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2015/08/28/major-change-proposed-for-inuit-writing/>

Aboriginal hairstyles express culture, pride and identity

'I can do whatever I want to my hair but I also feel like ... I pull my strength from it'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 28, 2015 6:01 AM CT Last Updated: Aug 28, 2015 6:01 AM CT



Jennie Vandermeer shows off a feather design shaved into her head in Yellowknife.

Charlotte Overvold started shaving her head a few years ago when she got alopecia, a skin disease that causes hair to fall out.

"I was living in Vancouver. I was away from my family. I was very sad, really stressed," says Overvold, a Dene artist from the Northwest Territories.

She says getting alopecia devastated her.

"I really, really loved my hair and I felt like I was robbed of something that meant a lot to me."

For Overvold and many other aboriginal people, hair is a connection to ancestry and spirituality. Since the beginning of time, hair has been used by cultures to express identity, religion and individuality.

But it has also been used as a symbol of oppression, assimilation and even resistance. Students attending Indian residential schools in Canada had their hair cut short, but when members of the Indian Brotherhood started calling for First Nations' rights in the 1960s, they grew their hair long.

'I pull strength from it'

Following the advice of her father, Overvold eventually returned to the North and began to feel whole again. Two weeks after she returned, her hair grew back.

Now in Yellowknife, her hair flows long past her shoulders — but it won't for long. Overvold slowly moves her clippers along the side of her head and begins to shave one side of her head.



'A friend said to me: 'indigenous hair is so gorgeous. I don't know why anyone would want to dye it or cut it,' says Charlotte Overvold, a Dene artist. (Hilary Bird)

Some people in the North and across the country are getting creative with their hair and using it as a symbol of pride to express who they are.

"I can do whatever I want to my hair," says Overvold, "but I also feel like I have power with it too, like I pull my strength from it."

Like Overvold, Linzie McIvor has shaved half her head. The Cree hairstylist lives in Vancouver but grew up in Yellowknife.



'Because Aboriginal people have this thick head of hair and it's very straight, you could get a lot of shading done with it and a lot of fun images in it and stuff like that,' says Linzie McIvor, a hair stylist from the N.W.T., living in Vancouver.

"I have such straight hair that doesn't do anything ... I'm always trying to mix it up and put some texture and colour into it."

McIvor talks about the Mohawk as an early example of an aboriginal-inspired hairstyle. She thinks First Nations culture is becoming more prevalent in society.

"You want to raise your head high to be proud of being aboriginal. So I feel like people are expressing their culture a lot more."

She says the thick, straight hair of aboriginal people makes it easy to add shading and shave designs into.

'I like your ulu'

Alexia Cousins in Iqaluit has a traditional Inuit knife, called an ulu, shaved into the back of her hair. The idea came at the suggestion of a friend, and Cousins didn't hesitate.



Alexia Cousins has a traditional Inuit knife, called an ulu, shaved into her hair. She says she's been getting a lot of compliments. (Submitted by Alexia Cousins)

"My hair's always changing. I get pretty bored of it quickly so you know I've been known to change my hair every three to four weeks."

Cousins, who previously had her hair dyed the colours of northern lights, says she's getting a lot of compliments on her new style.

A lot of people were just walking up to me and saying 'Hey, I like your haircut,' 'Hey, I like your ulu.'"

A feather for bravery

Women aren't the only ones getting their hair styled in a specific way to express their culture. Five-year old Zander Lennie of Tulita, N.W.T., has a feather design shaved into his hair.

His mother Lynda Lennie says Zander loves everything about his culture, from wearing a vest to playing the drum to getting his hair styled a certain way.

"I thought it would be nice and, as he thinks the feather comes as an award for bravery, I knew he would like it," she says about his hair design.

Lennie says she has seen another unique hairstyle in her community of about 500 people.

"I seen a lady here who used to have two braids in her hair and then have a thin strip of moose hide intertwined between them like the olden days. It looked very beautiful and very elegant. It was awesome to see that she was proud to wear her hairstyle like that."



Zander Lennie, 5, of Tulita, N.W.T., loved the feather design shaved into his hair so much he was 'showing it off to everyone,' says his mother, Lynda Lennie. (Submitted by Lynda Lennie)

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/aboriginal-hairstyles-express-culture-pride-and-identity-1.3206322>

This Is What Indigenous Artists Think of Your Hipster Headdress

By [Devin Pacholik](#)



This article originally appeared on Noisey Canada.

A bunch of music festivals have banned attendees from wearing First Nations headdresses. From BC's Bass Coast to Montreal's Osheaga and Île Soniq—more and more [Canadian organizers](#) are demanding people keep their faux feathers at home. Other taboo symbols on their politically correct radars include [Confederate flags](#) and [bindis](#). If these symbols aren't technically banned (yet) at your local festival, there's a good chance you'll be [publicly shamed](#) if you choose to make a fashion statement out of them. Some people need to be told cultural insensitivity isn't cool.

On the other hand, festival organizers' decisions to outright ban these objects are seen by some as a descent into the sensitivity abyss. After all, where do they draw the line? Should bros have to cover their tribal tattoos? Should Kanye leave his Jesus piece at home? Could beer flags and visibly drunk attendees be triggering [recovering alcoholics](#)? In a possible future, gate security may require training on how to screen people for their potential to offend. Organizers are doing their best to create safe spaces, but there are innumerable what ifs on the road to idealism.

Let's try the educational approach! On the topic of headdresses, outside of festival regulations there is no law preventing you from putting one on. Ditto if you're planning a tasteless Halloween costume or themed party. Freedom of expression and all that. However, that freedom also means other people can express how pissed off they are by your cultural appropriation. I reached out to seven Indigenous artists to get their opinions on the banning of headdresses at music festivals across Canada. All of them were pleased to hear the death rattle of the hipster headdress.

Hellnback: "Headdresses are earned"

Even in my own Native culture, I wouldn't go out and wear a headdress. You can't just put those on for pictures or whatever. You gotta earn that shit. There's a whole protocol you have to go through. For people to put them on as a costume, they don't understand what they're wearing. It's disrespectful to be high or drunk or fucked up when you're at a festival while wearing one. When people wear those, you can't be like that. I think it's

highly disrespectful for people to wear headdresses like that, and I think it's cool festivals are banning them.

Drezus: "Don't mock us"

I support banning them because, personally, I feel like people are mocking who I am as a Native person. In my culture, you have to go through the proper channels and ceremonies to wear a headdress. I can't wear one myself, and people are out here wearing fake feathers and plastic on their heads. C'mon man, have some respect for yourself.

Buffy Sainte-Marie: "Appropriation distracts us from 'real Indian issues'"

We reached out to Buffy Sainte-Marie, and her team sent me this statement she recently posted on Facebook.

Appropriating Native American traditional regalia underscores the thoughtlessness of the ignorant who still don't understand, usually because nobody's ever made it clear. Let's smarten you up. If you had planned to wear a headdress to a concert, please don't. Our headdresses aren't fashion statements, and we don't feel complimented by your appropriation.

Our beautiful feather headdresses belong to deep cultural and religious parts of our actual ancestral heritage. They are as personal to us as your grandmother's photo is to your family who might object to see it misused on the crotch of a wrestler on TV.

Cher on a horse in a mini skirt in the 70s did not turn her into an Indian, and distracted attention away from real Indian issues, and the same thing continues today. Seeing Vegas headdresses on bikini and pasty-clad models is disgusting and frustrating. David Guetta's [Fuck] Me I'm Famous nightclub shows are especially low.

Darrell McBride (Mustapio): "Cultural objects are not costumes"

I have a bias because I am a descendant of chiefs. My grandfather was chief of the Timiskaming First Nation for 12 years; my mother was also chief—her term was close to 16 years. She was the chief who took on Toronto over their plan to dump garbage in our territory in an abandoned fractured mine shaft.

I feel that the headdress is a part of our sacred traditions and is a sign of respect—the polar opposite of what festival goers and party people get out of wearing these items. I have never felt comfortable with anyone using anyone's culture as a Halloween costume. I feel we as a society should have respect for each other by now. It seems ridiculous.

Amanda Rheame: "You aren't honoring Native culture"

There are items in every culture that have to be legitimately earned and cannot be imitated or faked. I think it is really important that if you are going to mock or attempt to honour a certain symbol that you understand what the symbol represents in the first place. A headdress is typically a restricted item and has to be earned. I think that the banning of headdresses at festivals is appropriate, and that if someone wants to properly honor or celebrate Native culture there are more respectful ways to do so.

Kristi Lane Sinclair: "They aren't sexy"

Ugh, hipster headdresses. Taking a symbol of respect and parading it around [and pairing it] with a bikini further sexualizes an already out of control stereotype. We're trying so hard to get the message across that our women's lives matter, which is even more difficult with the whole sexy squaw fad. So yeah, this mockery is not respectful or cute, and it's sure not flattering.

Joey Stylez: "Headdresses are sacred"

Personally, I'm pleased as fuck festivals are banning headdresses. I'm so happy. I got a headdress, and I earned it. It was made for me. It's not just given to you; it's not just an accessory. You have to earn those headdresses. When you see me wear a headdress in "Indian Outlaw" [the music video,] that was made for me by someone who was taught by my medicine man elder. There have been white people who have earned headdresses; they served time with communities by being side-by-side with Natives. If you earned your headdress, it doesn't matter what color you are. Same with bindis and what's happening with that: I don't think you should be wearing that for fun, but if that's your culture, that's yours. Elders give headdresses. It's not just a pair of Gucci shoes or Louis Vuitton [accessories]. Those feathers come from sacred animals that we were grateful gave their lives for us. We pray for them. You got to wear those with pride.

Devin Pacholik is a Canadian writer. He is [on Twitter](#).

Direct Link: <http://noisy.vice.com/blog/this-is-what-indigenous-artists-think-of-your-hipster-headaddress>

Ashley Callingbull, First Nations woman, crowned Mrs. Universe

Wins beauty pageant in Belarus for married contestants

[CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 30, 2015 1:19 PM MT Last Updated: Aug 31, 2015 11:42 AM MT



A 25-year-old from Alberta's Enoch Cree Nation has become the first First Nations woman and the first Canadian to win the Mrs. Universe pageant.

Ashley Callingbull, whose married name is Burnham, was crowned the winner in Belarus Saturday night.

"I'm really overwhelmed right now," Callingbull said.

"My phone is blowing up. Everything is blowing up. I love it."

The Mrs. Universe competition, which started in 2007, is an international beauty pageant that focuses on married contestants.

Callingbull said winning the Mrs. Universe crown is a blow against the stereotypes surrounding First Nations people. When competing in previous pageants, she said, she was judged for coming from the Enoch reserve, west of Edmonton, and told that she wasn't expected to place well in the competitions.

She gained attention after becoming the only First Nations contestant in the 2010 Miss Canada pageant. She said that while she got a lot of support, she was also the target of racist comments.

"A newspaper (wrote), 'What is she going to do for her talent, write a welfare cheque with her toes?'" Callingbull said.

"Just horrible, horrible things."



Ashley Callingbull, whose married name is Burnham, became the first Canadian and first woman from a First Nation to win the Mrs. Universe pageant. She took the title on Aug. 29, 2015, in Belarus. (Vasily Fedosenko/Reuters)

That made her only more determined to showcase her culture. During the competition, she wore a jingle dress, often worn during pow-wow dances. For the talent competition, Callingbull chose to sing a traditional song while wearing a white buckskin dress.

"Everything basically stated, 'This woman is First Nations native, and she's proud of it,'" she said.

'A success story'

Callingbull, who is a trained dancer and professional actress, has taken part in several pageants in the past. But she said she was particularly drawn to the 2015 Mrs. Universe competition because of its theme: battling domestic violence and child abuse.

As a survivor of sexual and physical abuse, she wanted the chance to help others dealing with the same pain.

"I was picking bottles for food. I would have never thought I'm going to be Mrs. Universe someday," she said.

"Growing up and dealing with that, I thought this is a perfect platform to share my story ... to be a success story for them."

Callingbull said she hoped her win would be a blow to stereotypes about aboriginal contestants and encourage other First Nations women to participate.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/ashley-callingbull-first-nations-woman-crowned-mrs-universe-1.3209179>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

Inuit org: work on \$175-million training fund will take time

“We’re very preliminary right now. We’ve got to get this right”

STEVE DUCHARME, September 02, 2015 - 7:00 am



Cathy Towtongie, president of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., at a board meeting Aug. 31. She said before any development of NTI's \$175-million training corporation is done, results from a Nunavut Inuit labour force survey must be completed. (PHOTO BY STEVE DUCHARME)

Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.'s board of directors is stressing knowledge before action, following last May's \$255.5 million settlement with the Government of Canada and the creation of a new \$175-million training fund to help Inuit get Nunavut government jobs.

To manage the training money, NTI is supposed to create a new entity called the Nunavut Inuit Training Corp.

But NTI President Cathy Towtongie said before any development of the training body is done, results from a Nunavut Inuit labour force survey must be completed.

That survey, which Ottawa must pay for and do in conjunction with NTI and the Government of Nunavut, was promised to NTI under the terms of [a settlement agreement that resolves a \\$1 billion lawsuit that NTI launched in 2006](#).

“It will give us a picture of where to target the training,” said Towtongie, who is in Iqaluit to attend the NTI board meeting.

For her, the first priority will be training for government jobs.

“Right now the middle management of the Government of Nunavut is basically not Inuit.”

Towtongie said she can see training cooperation expanding into other areas of employment, using programs and infrastructure already established, after the labour force needs of the public service are established.

“If we can enhance these training programs already in existence, make both short and long term strategic plans, then we will have an able workforce that will be able to work across all sectors — in mining, oil and gas, and the government.”

NTI will provide the public with no definitive schedule on how they will move forward until after the labour force survey is completed.

“We’re very preliminary right now. We’ve got to get this right, so we’re taking our time,” cautions NTI’s CEO, James Arreak, who said several positions still need to be filled.

The Nunavut Inuit Training Corp.’s board will comprise five representatives from NTI and two from the Government of Nunavut.

The development of the training corporation, which will manage \$175 million worth of the settlement money, represents compensation for complaints that the federal government failed to implement Article 23 of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement, which requires that government carry out training and affirmative action programs to help Inuit get government jobs in Nunavut.

The government should also conduct surveys every five years to monitor the success of Inuit employment programs, the NLCA says.

According to GN statistics, the [territorial government’s Inuit employment levels](#) hover right now at around 50 per cent.

Article 23 states that affirmative action programs must continue until Inuit employment levels are equal to the proportion of Inuit living within Nunavut — roughly 85 per cent.

The cost of supporting under-employed Inuit since 1999 has had a severe impact on the territorial government’s budget, NTI said.

“Let’s face it, [Inuit] will be in Nunavut and by keeping them untrained, uneducated and on welfare, it will cost us money,” Towtongie said.

Under the settlement, Ottawa also gave NTI \$80.5 million, which NTI said they will invest.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_org_work_on_175-million_training_fund_will_take_time/

Aboriginal Politics

The ITK presidential contest: Natan Obed

"I’m at a point in my career where I feel I have the ability to take on this responsibility"

JIM BELL, August 27, 2015 - 3:59 pm



Nunatsiaq News has published candidate profiles this week, in alphabetical order, for the three people contesting the president’s position at Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. ITK members and delegates will choose a winner at a general meeting to be held Sept. 17 in Cambridge Bay.

For Natan Obed it’s time to take the next step.

After a 14-year career serving Inuit in business development and social advocacy, mostly in non-elected administrative positions, he’s ready to put his education and experience to work as president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

“I’ve really matured and grown up working for Inuit orgs... I’m at a point in my career where I feel I have the ability to take on this responsibility. I believe in Inuit representation,” Obed said.

At age 39, Obed already owns an impressive resumé.

In the 1990s, he left his home in Nain, Labrador, to get a bachelor’s degree in English and American Studies at Boston’s Tufts University, where he also became a star defenceman playing in the New England college hockey circuit. He also played Junior A hockey with the Helena Ice Pirates.

After that he went to work for the Labrador Inuit Association, for whom he helped negotiate an Inuit impact and benefits agreement with the Voisey’s Bay Nickel Co., and where he developed and carried out annual budgets and action plans, and supervised a staff of five.

From there, he served nearly two years as ITK’s director of socio-economic development before moving to Iqaluit to take the job he does now: director of social and cultural development for Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

There, he supervises 11 employees and leads NTI’s work on education, language, justice, health, suicide prevention and housing, chairs NTI’s Article 32 working group, co-chairs the Nunavut Food Security Coalition and performs numerous other tasks related mostly to social and cultural concerns.

And as a beneficiary of the Nunatsiavut land claim agreement he still serves as a trustee on the body that oversees the Labrador Inuit Capital Strategy Trust, which looks after Labrador Inuit business interests through the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies.

“Being involved in different Inuit governance structures, including the Labrador Inuit capital trust, it’s really formed a lot of clear views that I have about the role that Inuit orgs play and the priorities that we should have,” Obed said.

And those priorities?

The first is governance — which means ITK’s operations must be healthy.

“ITK has to function well in order for the entirety of the governance system to function well, because a lot of the issues at the community level have clear connections with decisions at the national level that Inuit can influence,” Obed said.

But the policy areas that he’s most comfortable with and gets most passionate about are children and youth, mental health, suicide prevention, education and language.

“We need to ensure our children grow up in healthy safe environments and get an Inuit-specific education, and we need to ensure that those who are caring for those children are

able to function and have the resources to provide a home or food on the table, or ensure they get the social and cultural and linguistic skills that we all say we want,” Obed said.

At the same time, he recognizes that it’s ITK’s four members — the heads of the four regional land claim organizations — who control ITK and set its political priorities.

And under Bylaw No. 2, which serves as the organization’s constitution, it’s those four members who effectively choose the president.

But that doesn’t mean the work of an ITK president is irrelevant, Obed said.

“The work that happens at the national level can be greatly influenced by the concepts and ideas that are put forward by the ITK president.”

And he said that leads to another important job that ITK continues to do and should do more of in the future: ensuring the fur-flung Inuit regions inside Canada stay together.

Those regional entities have all become centres of power and influence that did not exist when the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada was formed in the early 1970s.

“So there’s also the role that ITK can plan in bringing Inuit regions closer together, and that would be a priority for me as a side of the advocacy piece, a strengthening piece within the Inuit collective,” he said.

Not since 1996 and 1997, when Mary Sillett of Labrador was appointed by the organization’s board, has a Labrador beneficiary served as ITK president.

Since then, all of ITK’s presidents have come from either Nunavut or Nunavik.

But Obed is not suggesting it’s now Labrador’s turn at the top.

“No, I don’t think so. In this day and age I don’t think that picking somebody because they’re from a certain region is necessarily the most strategic way of selecting an ITK president.”

At the same time, his cross-regional resumé is still an advantage, he said.

“I have experience from Nunavut and I am from Nunatsiavut and I have worked for Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, so I have an understanding of the different Inuit regions and an understanding of how ITK works.”

He said Sarah Leo, the president of the Nunatsiavut government, already supports him, and that he will reach out to the other land claim presidents to promote his candidacy.

“I’ve also had a number of other people who sent me emails or stopped me on the street and encouraged me, so I’m really thankful for that,” Obed said.

And for regular beneficiaries who support him, he suggests that they send emails or letters to their respective regional presidents to make their wishes known.

He also supports ITK's current four-member governance structure and said he believes the current method of choosing an ITK president — which usually involves a group of about 12 people — is superior to the pan-Arctic elections that were used until the mid-1990s.

That's because the old system contained the potential for political conflict between the ITK president and the regional presidents.

"If the president of ITK had his or her own mandate and was elected by the general populace, then there's a distinct possibility of conflicting priorities between the regional presidents and the ITK president," he said.

"So it does make sense that the ITK board have more control over the ITK president," he said.

Obed said he submitted his own declaration of candidacy, with the required 20 signatures from beneficiaries.

ITK members and appointed delegates will choose a president Sept. 17 at a general meeting to be held in Cambridge Bay.

The other candidates are:

Terry Audla, [whose profile is available here.](#)

Jerry Komaksiutiksak, [whose profile is available here.](#)

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674the_itk_presidential_contest_natan_obed/

Group mobilizing aboriginal people for October vote

By Kerry Benjoe, Leader-Post August 28, 2015

A grassroots organization still believes education is the key to getting aboriginal people out to the polls in the upcoming federal election.

Earlier this year, Glenda Abbott and Melody Wood decided the impending federal election was too important to ignore, and together they launched Indigenous Vote Saskatchewan (IVS).

They were spurred into action because they thought a spring election could take place.

Abbott said the early mobilization played in their favour, because not only were they able to get indigenous people interested in the topic, they were able to compile a list of volunteers for the October election.

Abbott said one topic that has come up over and over is whether or not indigenous people should participate in the election process.

Although people are still divided on the issue, she believes talking about how the vote relates to sovereignty is a good thing and fully supports those discussions. IVS is hosting a public forum on the topic next month in Saskatoon, and insists it is not pressuring anyone to vote or not to vote.

"We do face a colonial history in Canada, so I think it's important for people to understand the issues," Abbott said. "Some people may not know why you wouldn't vote."

She said the issue is not so cut and dried, especially in this day and age.

"We are kind of caught in a system that doesn't belong to us. The Canadian voting system, the way that it is, doesn't belong to us. So how do we, as indigenous people, begin to re-envision our sovereignty on our own terms - not defined by the Indian Act, not defined by Canada, but defined by us?" She said the time has come to begin to talk about sovereignty and to organize. Abbott admits she has many good friends who refuse to take part in the electoral process, and she knows she is not alone.

"I respect people who are non-voters, but at the same time we are sitting in a critical period, where we need to talk about voting," she said.

In addition to talking about the significance of voting, IVS is getting ready to mobilize its volunteers.

Abbott said community outreach is on the agenda, because voting is a relatively new concept to several First Nation communities, so education is necessary. The group's focus is to help communities register their members to vote.

"We are relatively small, we are all volunteers," Abbott said. "We are just going to keep meeting, keep talking and keep redirecting based on what comes up."

She encourages indigenous people to talk about the vote and educate themselves on whether or not they should participate.

IVS is sharing information on Facebook and has created videos about the importance of voting. Abbott said anyone interested in getting involved or accessing information is encouraged to visit the Facebook page and send the group questions.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/news/Group+mobilizing+aboriginal+people+October+vote/11323774/story.html>

Terry Cormier hopes to carry the Green banner in Newfoundland

[Investigates](#) | August 28, 2015 by [Todd Lamirande](#) |



As he [told a local newspaper](#), [Terry Cormier](#) says it's his job to make Newfoundlanders realize just how green they really are. He is running in [Long Range Mountains](#), NL against [Devon Babstock](#) of the NDP and [Gudie Hutchings](#) of the Liberal Party. As of this writing, the Conservatives have yet to nominate a candidate in this riding.

Cormier is a member of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation. If you've never heard of it, Qalipu is one of the newest—created in 2011—and largest First Nations in Canada—some 20 000 members, second only to Six Nations. This candidate profile is too short to go into detail about the controversy over who is and isn't a member of Qalipu. The band was expecting 10 000 applications and instead got nearly 10 times that amount. Several deadlines have passed for settling the membership. Meanwhile, a group of people whose applications were rejected has formed, called the Mi'kmaq First Nations Assembly of Newfoundland. It is [currently taking the issue](#) through the courts.



Cormier lives in Corner Brook, where he oversaw the raising of the Mi'kmaq flag over city hall this past Aboriginal Day. "I think it's tremendous that the flag is flying," Cormier [told The Western Star](#) following the ceremony. "I think that this recognition of indigenous identity is really an incredible thing and it's wonderful to see it growing to this extent where the city, for the second year, recognizes it." He also credited Qalipu women for keeping Indigenous culture alive on the island of Newfoundland.

In his [biography](#), Cormier says he is still learning about his Mi'kmaq culture. "The values of our ancestors — respect for the Creator, the Earth and all life; equality in the circle; community — reflect who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and mirror exactly what the Green Party stands for."

Cormier is a career diplomat, having been posted to countries in Europe, Asia and Africa over the past 35 years. From 1999-2004 he was Director of International Crime and Terrorism with the Department of Foreign Affairs. It helped craft Canada's response to terrorism after 9/11. Cormier, therefore, has a strong opinion on the Conservatives Bill C-51. "Just hang on a second," [he told an audience at the University of Victoria](#) earlier this year. "Why are we doing this? And why are we doing it so quickly? And why are we doing it in this context?"

Cormier promises to not take a salary if elected, instead spending the money on projects in his riding. But getting elected in Long Range Mountains is, well, a long shot. It is a new riding that has been carved out of two others that both voted in Liberal MPs in 2011. He will do well if he can improve on the dismal 1 percent the Green Party received in the last election.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/08/28/terry-cormier-hopes-to-carry-the-green-banner-in-newfoundland/>

Making the case: First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders outline priorities

Making the case: First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders outline priorities for the 2015 federal election.



Clément Chartier, president of Métis National Council, said he would like to see the federal government commit to compensating the survivors of Métis residential schools.

By: [Joanna Smith](#) Ottawa Bureau reporter, Published on Tue Sep 01 2015

Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations

Closing the gaps in opportunity and outcomes between First Nations and non-Aboriginal Canadians will require investments in education, housing, safe drinking water, mental health services and child welfare, says Bellegarde, which he argues would also be an investment in the economy.

“If you start making those investments now, within the next 10-12 years, we’d have a multibillion-dollar impact on Canada’s Gross Domestic Product, because you would get First Nations people out of that social welfare dependency and participating fully in the economy,” Bellegarde said.

“Work with us, partner with us, look at developing those policies, legislation and programs to close the gap.”

Terry Audla, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

“They need to look at Canada’s Arctic as ‘Inuit Nunangat’ — the Inuit homeland — and understand that infrastructure is sorely needed and the support systems needed for health and social services,” said Audla.

“The one example I use is that this nation was pretty much created by building a railway from coast to coast without any thought to cost and that they need to look at that for further north. All Canadians should be proud we are considered an Arctic nation, but relative to other Arctic nations, we are decades behind when it comes to infrastructure,” he said.

Clément Chartier, president of Métis National Council

The Supreme Court of Canada will hear arguments in early October on whether to uphold decisions by lower courts that Métis should be recognized as “Indians” under the Constitution Act. If the Métis are successful, Chartier wants the federal government to implement the decision by opening access to more of its programs and services.

Chartier said he would also like to see the federal government commit to compensating the survivors of Métis residential schools such as the one in Ile-a-la-Crosse, Sask.

“Residential schools have been dealt with, but yet the Métis have been excluded,” said Chartier.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/federal-election/2015/09/01/making-the-case-first-nations-mtis-and-inuit-leaders-outline-priorities.html>

‘I’m not going to shut up’: First Nations woman crowned Mrs. Universe urges Canadians to vote for new PM

[Sarah Boesveld](#) | September 1, 2015 | Last Updated: Sep 2 10:14 AM ET
[More from Sarah Boesveld](#) | [@sarahboesveld](#)



Sergei Gapon/AFP/Getty Images Ashley Burnham, a Cree woman who hails from Alberta, is the first indigenous woman to be crowned Mrs. Universe.

When Ashley Callingbull Burnham entered Miss Universe Canada — her first pageant — she was met with jeers like “What will her talent be? Drinking Lysol?” The sexual abuse survivor won second runner-up and silenced her critics. Now, five years later, the Edmonton-born Enoch Cree woman is Mrs. Universe — the first Canadian and first First Nations woman to win the title of an international pageant that judges contestants on their advocacy record rather than their bikini catwalk (though they only qualify if they’re married). The 25-year-old was crowned in Minsk, Belarus, this weekend. She spoke with the National Post’s Sarah Boesveld.

Q *Your win comes amidst a federal election, the first real conversation Canada has had about murdered and missing indigenous women and not long after Idle No More. Do you link the attention you’re getting with what some might call a wave of momentum on these issues?*



Mrs. Canada Ashley Burnham being crowned Mrs. Universe in Minsk on August 29, 2015.

A I’m not going to lie, I was hoping I’d win, so I’d be able to address all these issues. Obviously it was a plan of mine if I did win, that I’d be able to use my voice to bring attention to all these things affecting First Nations people and I wasn’t sure how much attention I would get from competing in this pageant. If I was just still a university student, I didn’t do any pageants or I wasn’t an actor, no one would listen to what I have to say about murdered and missing aboriginal women. They wouldn’t care. People don’t expect a pageant girl to go out and say really crazy things right off the bat. They probably just expected me to have a title and be pretty and that’s it: be pretty and shut up. But I’m not going to shut up.

Q *One of your first moves Monday was to encourage First Nations people to vote in this election and elect a new prime minister. People don’t expect that from a beauty queen.*

A Some people are like ‘Oh my god, your first day and you’re being so political.’ Some people are really taken by it. The ignorant had a lot of things to say about it. But I’ve got more supporters than anything, because it’s something that needs to be addressed and needs to be talked about.

Q *Why do we need a new prime minister?*

A First Nations people are always put on the back burner. Our issues are never important. I’ve talked to a few politicians and they’ve all said that to me.

Q *Politicians of all political stripes?*

A A few of them have said that to me. It drives me crazy because we are the first people of Canada. We are as important as anyone else.

Q *I see your mom is also a beauty queen.*

A Yeah! Actually, she was inspired by me. She’s been through everything I’ve been through with the abuse — she’s personally been through more. She’s a very strong woman: She battled cancer, she lost my baby sister and she used to be 300 lbs and she lost a lot of weight healthfully. She wanted to do something for herself to make her feel better about herself because she’s been through so much hell.

Q *A lot of people have qualified their congratulations by saying “I’m not a fan of pageants, but...”*

A I was watching an interview out of Edmonton and they were talking about me — one girl was really praising me and the two other girls were saying they don’t like when girls are judged, but they were judging me and the pageant. This pageant is much different from Miss Universe: We are not judged in swimsuits, we are not physically judged on our appearance. Even the whole final night when we wear an evening gown, the winner is already pre-chosen.

Q *But come on — you’re beautiful. You don’t get judged at all on looks?*

A For the pageant? No. A lot of the girls ... I don’t want to make this sound bad, but if you look up the girls who competed, you’ll see physical appearance doesn’t matter.



Maxim Malinovsky/AFP/Getty Images Mrs. Canada Ashley Burnham celebrates after being crowned Mrs. Universe during the Mrs. Universe 2015 pageant final in Minsk on August 29, 2015.

Q *The whole ‘Mrs. Universe’ thing sounds kind of retrograde on the face of it.*

A Well, it’s funny because I didn’t think a lot of people were going to care that I’m in a Mrs. Pageant. But I’m sorry! I fell in love with someone and got married! A friend showed me this pageant — at first I said ‘No way,’ but I looked into it and went for it. My mom won Mrs. North America and she said it’s completely different — all the girls make friends, they don’t try to sabotage you.

I was watching an interview out of Edmonton and they were talking about me — one girl was really praising me and the two other girls were saying they don’t like when girls are judged, but they were judging me and the pageant

Q *You said in the press this week: “They’ve seen girls in sexy Pocahontas costumes, but I showed them the real deal.” It seemed like a sly dig at cultural appropriation. Was it?*

A I was trying to show it the proper way. I didn’t want to be wearing a scandalous little outfit and a headdress because that’s so wrong on so many levels. The headdress is sacred, women don’t wear that. I wore our traditional regalia. I showcased the healing dance, the jingle dress, I showcased everything I possibly could that they would be educated and understand our culture is not a costume.

Q *Having achieved this platform now, what story are you hoping to leave with people?*

A I really want to leave a story of hope with them because I want women to realize that they aren’t trash, they can’t be mistreated in any way. I felt growing up that I mattered to no one and that I’d never be anything. As a child I never felt like I would be Mrs. Universe, ever. I had no dreams for myself because I was constantly treated horribly. I had nothing and I also lived in fear every day of my life. When I work with women and these children going through these things, they are worthy...they should love and appreciate themselves as they are. They shouldn’t let fear take over and control their lives.

Q *You signed on for the pageant because of its mandate to raise awareness about domestic violence. But your win has also been upheld as something that could help battle racism against aboriginal people in Canada. Did that surprise you?*

A A lot of people are praising me, like ‘Yes, we’re finally being recognized for who we are.’ A lot of people don’t expect me to be up there and have a title because I’m First Nations. That’s how stereotypical society is and how racist it can be. I’m still experiencing some of that racism on some of my posts — some people are saying ‘I’m not a real Canadian,’ which is silly because if anything, I’m a real Canadian.

Q *If you could have represented the First Nations community in your title, would you have?*

A Oh hell yeah. It just sounds better. Or “Mrs. Indigenous Universe.” That’d be something really cool.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/first-nations-woman-crowned-mrs-universe-urges-canadians-to-vote-for-new-pm>

Despite need, aboriginal issues not getting much attention in election campaign

Issues such as education, poverty, housing, safe drinking water, youth suicides, jobs, natural resources should be top of mind, First Nations leaders say.



Nadine Tookate, left, and Janelle Nakogee, from the Cree community of Attawapiskat in northern Ontario, were the valedictorians of the first class to graduate from the new school built in their community.

By: [Joanna Smith](#) Ottawa Bureau reporter, Published on Tue Sep 01 2015

OTTAWA—Nadine Tookate, 14, recalled standing in the quiet library of her new school, a Robert Munsch book in each hand, when the magnitude of what she and her community had achieved suddenly hit her.

She is the oldest of five sisters in her family and the youngest will next year begin kindergarten at Kattawapiskat Elementary School, the long-awaited new school on Attawapiskat First Nation that finally welcomed its first students last fall.

“She’ll never have to be so cold that she has to wear mittens to pick up a pencil,” Tookate, crying, told those gathered in Ottawa to launch the book *Children of the Broken Treaty*, by Charlie Angus, the NDP candidate in the northern Ontario riding of Timmins-James Bay.

“That’s what Shannen fought for,” Tookate said of Shannen Koostachin, the youth activist from her community who helped galvanize public support for the new school before she was killed in a highway accident when she was 15.

“This is what we all should fight for.”

The education of First Nations children and youth seems like a straightforward issue on which everyone — including political parties — should agree, as Aboriginal child welfare advocate Cindy Blackstock argued in her speech at that same event.

“Equality doesn’t have a colour,” said Blackstock, the president of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society.

“It’s not green and it’s not blue and it’s not red and it’s not orange. If you talk to children, it’s black and white. It’s good and bad,” Blackstock said.

Still, the only time indigenous peoples came up in any substantial way during the first party leaders debate on Aug. 6 was in relation to pipeline projects, and their priorities remain an under-covered issue in this election campaign.

Nearly two decades after the last Indian residential school shut down, the issue remains complex and fraught with tension.

A \$1.9-billion pledge from the Conservative government to invest in First Nations education — in exchange for supporting controversial reform legislation — fell apart last year as Shawn Atleo resigned from his role as national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, accused by his fellow chiefs of selling out.

Building even a single school is not easy: it took 14 years of back-and-forth with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to open the new school in

Attawapiskat, a Cree community in northern Ontario, after the old one was shut down over health and safety concerns that included contaminated soil.

Imagine, then, the monumental challenge presented by the 94 recommendations the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which called for nothing less than a complete overhaul in the relationship between Canada — and Canadians — and its Aboriginal peoples in its report on the history and legacy of residential schools.

“We have described for you a mountain. We have shown you a path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing,” Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, said when the report was unveiled in June.

Education, poverty, housing, safe drinking water, youth suicides, jobs, natural resources, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, property rights, specific and comprehensive land claims, the Idle No More movement, substance abuse, food security, high incarceration rates, financial accountability, missing and murdered women and girls, culture, language, family violence, treaty rights, residential schools, the environment, infrastructure, children in care, floods

The challenges can be so immediate and overwhelming that National Chief Perry Bellegarde of the Assembly of First Nations mentions it as one of the reasons — along with the idea of sovereignty and nationhood — behind low voter turnout among Aboriginal peoples.

“We have bread-and-butter issues every day, like housing and food and shelter and access to potable water, so we’re not really concerned about the politics because we have other issues to focus on, day-to-day needs that have to be met,” Bellegarde said in an interview last week.

“Another reason would be the marginalization: that no matter what we do as First Nations, our vote doesn’t matter, so there’s some apathy as well.”

Janelle Nakogee, 14, is too young to vote.

But she is old enough to feel time slipping away, which is what she noticed as the years passed and she realized she would get to enjoy only one year — Grade 8 — in the new school before moving away from home.

“This year, I had to make the decision to leave my community and go to high school in Parry Sound, over 1,000 kilometres away from my home in Attawapiskat,” said a tearful Nakogee, who along with Tookate was the valedictorian for the first Grade 8 class to graduate from the new school in June.

“When I was leaving, it broke my heart to see my mom cry,” Nakogee told the room in Ottawa.

It also strengthened her resolve to continue pushing: not just for a better high school in Attawapiskat, but better schools for all First Nations children everywhere.

“I’m so happy to be a part of the voices that are talking about native education. Just because we got our school, doesn’t mean we stop. There are other kids going to school in portables on First Nation reserves. Every kid needs education in every First Nation,” Nakogee said.

“I know how it feels to be forgotten. I don’t want other kids feeling that way,” Nakogee said.

GETTING OUT THE VOTE

The Assembly of First Nations wants to ensure people living on reserves who want to cast ballots in the federal election are not hampered by lack of proper identification.

The organization drafted a template for a proof-of-address letter to be signed by band administrators that would serve as one of two pieces of voter ID accepted by Elections Canada.

“We wanted to make sure First Nations people had the opportunity, should they decide to exercise their right to vote, that they have at least one of the pieces easily accessible,” said AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

The idea, part of efforts to increase historically low turnout among Indigenous peoples in Canada, came in response to concerns the Fair Elections Act would make it more difficult for First Nations people living on reserves to vote.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/09/01/despite-need-aboriginal-issues-not-getting-much-attention-in-election-campaign.html>

Metis Michael McLeod hoping for a cabinet position, if elected in NWT

[Investigates](#) | September 2, 2015 by [Todd Lamirande](#)



Oops, a major oversight when we [did a profile of Floyd Roland](#) a few weeks ago, who is running for the Conservatives in the Northwest Territories. His Liberal opponent, [Michael McLeod](#), is also an Aboriginal person. They're both up against NDP incumbent [Dennis Bevington](#). So far, there is still no Green Party candidate.

McLeod certainly has no shortage of political experience. He's a former mayor of Fort Providence and served for several years (1999-2011) as an MLA in the territory's legislature, where he held several cabinet positions, including Transportation, Public Works, Environment and Municipal and Community Affairs. He's also been president of his Metis local and been vice-president of the Deh Cho Regional Council. Just prior to running McLeod had been on the board of the NWT's tourism development office. His brother is the territory's current premier, Robert McLeod.

But Michael McLeod is definitely his own man. On winning the Liberal nomination in early August, he [told a local news site](#) that his brother has his own work to do and won't be helping his campaign. He also believes that it's time for Bevington to be defeated after nearly a decade as MP, "I'm sure he's getting tired."



His concerns in the north are the need for a healthy economy and to do something about the high cost of living and housing in the territory. Even before he secured the nomination, he told a local radio station, Moose FM, that [the north needs a healthy economy](#) but that outstanding land claims need to be settled as quickly as possible so "there are no question marks" for potential investors. In that same radio interview, he expressed his ambitions if elected and if the Liberals form the next government. "I want to champion some of the issues that are out there. Look at being more than somebody that is sitting on the back bench. I want to be involved. I want to be considered for a cabinet position."

McLeod hopes that Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau's campaign promise to dramatically increase infrastructure spending trickles up north. He cited an all-weather road to isolated Dene communities, dredging the harbour in Hay River and building the Mackenzie Valley Highway as projects he supports. "A Liberal government will nearly double

federal infrastructure investment to \$125 billion – from the current \$65 billion – over the next decade. This will mean an additional \$9.5 billion for infrastructure by year ten. For years the lack of federal funding has served as a roadblock to the development of the NWT,” he [said in a Facebook post](#) on August 31st.

But McLeod still needs to defeat Bevington, who easily handled two star candidates in 2011, former NWT premier Joe Handley who ran for the Liberals, and Sandy Lee, a former NWT cabinet minister who ran for the Conservatives. According to [a northern daily news site, Edge](#), the Liberal Party in the NWT is still just a faint echo of its former self from the days when Ethel Blondin Andrew was MP. It points out the key to winning the riding is the city of Yellowknife which has been a Bevington stronghold in past elections. The [current seat projection](#) gives the NDP an 86% chance of keeping the seat. So McLeod, and Trudeau for that matter, have some work to do in order to be named to cabinet.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/09/02/metis-michael-mcleod-hoping-for-a-cabinet-position-if-elected-in-nwt/>

Cree/Dene woman running for NDP in Alberta riding home to Canada's tar sands

[Investigates](#) | September 3, 2015 by [Todd Lamirande](#)



So far, for [Melody Lepine](#), her campaign has been about dispelling myths about what the NDP would do to an industry thousands rely on for their livelihood in [Fort McMurray-Cold Lake](#). Her main opponents are [Kyle Harrietha](#) running for the Liberals and Conservative incumbent [David Yurdiga](#). The Green Party has yet to announce a candidate.

Lepine is a member of the Mikisew First Nation, which is also popularly known as Fort Chipewyan. The community came to national prominence over a year ago when a [report](#)

[came out](#) linking the tar sands to elevated rates of cancer. Lepine comes from the community but graduated high school in Fort McMurray, where she lived for several years. She went to the University of Alberta where she studied environmental conservation sciences and majored in land reclamation. For the past 12 years she has been Mikisew's Director of Government and Industry Relations.



It's not surprising one of her main concerns as a candidate is the environment. But early in her campaign she has had to clarify that the NDP are not anti-tar sands. "The oilsands (sic) should develop while ensuring that both our environment and the rights of Indigenous people are protected. Today, under the conservative government, this is not happening and the Liberals won't (sic) commit to addressing these two very critical issues. How can we support the growth of such an important resource without addressing these two important issues?" she said in [an August 22nd post on her Facebook page](#).

However Lepine believes tar sands development should be sustainable and that taxes and royalties off this resource should be used to benefit the lives of people in the riding. "And what I mean by sustainable is making sure that the environment is protected and that social impacts are addressed. Those types of social impacts are impacts to infrastructure. With more and more people moving into our region, do we have enough access to service like health care and affordable housing?" she said in [a Q & A with a local newspaper](#).

In that same interview, Lepine gave her stance on pipelines. "In terms of pipelines, much as how we would look at any other resource development project, I think the NDP have been very clear in supporting sustainable development which includes pipelines." She also stated that any development must consult with Aboriginal people and not infringe on any treaty rights.

She also had some choice words in to say about PM Stephen Harper and the federal government's anti-terror legislation, bill C-51 in another Facebook post. "He doesn't like free speech. He doesn't like protestors who take their convictions to the street. He doesn't

like public information getting out there without his approval — so he doesn't like any displays of independence from scientists, journalists, bureaucrats or judges. He doesn't like unions, or environmentalists, or opposition in any form. C-51 is made by and for a man who — like every dictator everywhere — thinks that his should be the last word on everything.”

Lepine is running in a riding hit hard by the collapse in oil prices. Fort McMurray-Cold Lake is new, having been carved out of two others that have been electing conservative candidates since the stone age. The incumbent David Yurdiga first won the riding in a 2014 byelection with only 47% of the vote. However, the turnout was extremely low and it would be considered a major upset if Lepine and the other candidates hold him to a similar vote count on October 19th.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/09/03/creedene-woman-running-for-ndp-in-alberta-riding-home-to-canadas-tar-sands/>

AFN chief not voting in election, despite push to get aboriginals out to polls



[Michelle Zilio](#), CTV Question Period

Published Wednesday, September 2, 2015 3:06PM EDT

Last Updated Wednesday, September 2, 2015 10:51PM EDT

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde says he will not be voting in the October federal election, despite his organization's national campaign encouraging aboriginal people to do so.

Bellegarde made the [comments on CTV's Power Play](#) on Wednesday, admitting that his decision could contradict his messaging.

"It could (contradict it) but I'm going to be encouraging people to get out to vote because, as an elected leader, we have to maintain that non-partisanship," said Bellegarde. "The only card I carry is a status card."

The AFN is a non-partisan organization.

Bellegarde's comments come as he encourages aboriginal Canadians, a population known to have a low voter turnout, to cast their ballot on Oct. 19. Elections Canada estimates the average voter turnout for eligible voters on First Nations reserves is 44 per cent.

Bellegarde, however, may have an uphill battle mobilizing some aboriginal voters -- especially those who believe their voice hasn't been heard in years.

In Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, located on the border of Ontario and Manitoba, residents have been under a boil-water advisory for 18 years.

And the 275 people who live there are still waiting for an all-season road and a water-treatment plant to be built. They also do not have a safe place to dump raw sewage.

"Our garbage is piling up on this island, we are dumping our raw sewage, there's no place to take it," Chief Erwin Redsky said. "We are close to the Trans-Canada Highway and the rest of society, yet society won't let us in."

The AFN has identified [51 ridings](#) where the aboriginal vote could influence the election outcome, and the group is also working with Elections Canada to help First Nations access voting tools.

"Our young people want change," said Bellegarde. "So there seems to be a greater awareness and growing interest amongst them that we can have impact."

AFN election priorities laid out

Bellegarde outlined the organization's federal election priorities on Wednesday, selling the plan as an economic benefit for all Canadians. He unveiled the plan, which would address the gap in quality of life between First Nations and other Canadians, at a [news conference in Ottawa](#).

"Our plan is about building a stronger country for all of us. Because when that gap closes, Canada wins," said Bellegarde. "First Nations can and will be a major factor in this election."

Bellegarde has repeatedly highlighted the fact that while Canada ranks between 6th and 8th on the United Nations Human Development Index, if the same indices are applied to First Nations people, the ranking falls anywhere between 63rd and 78th.

"If the economy is the overriding concern, then Canadians should get behind our plan because closing the gap will add \$400 billion to Canada's economy (in Growth Domestic Product growth)," he said. "And also you'll save \$115 billion in social spending by 2026."

Bellegarde refused to put an exact number on the cost of the AFN's plan, saying it would cost in the billions to close the gap between First Nations and other Canadians. He said he wants to speak with the new government before announcing specific numbers.

"I'm not going to give you a number yet. Come see me in maybe seven, eight months, and we'll have the right number," Bellegarde said.

The AFN has requested a formal response to its plan from the major federal parties, but has not set a hard deadline. And the organization's non-partisan status means it will work with whoever is elected to implement the plan.

"We'll work with whoever gets elected on Oct. 19 to build a better country for all of us," said Bellegarde.

The major federal parties reacted to the AFN's proposal on Wednesday. The Conservatives said they firmly believe that increasing aboriginal participation in the economy is the "most effective way to improve the well-being and quality of life for aboriginal people in Canada," and that more plans on this front are coming.

In a statement, the NDP reiterated its plans to call for an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, and to create a cabinet committee dedicated to indigenous issues.

And Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau said Bellegarde's priorities align with his party's aboriginal platform, which includes a massive \$2.6 billion First Nations education plan.

"I'm happy to see that the priorities put forward by AFN Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde are perfectly lined up with what the Liberals are committed to," said Trudeau at an event in Quebec City.

The AFN's plan features six overarching themes, each with specific priorities to be achieved over two time periods: the first 100 days and first two years after election day. Here's a summary of the priorities for the first 100 days:

1) Strengthening First Nations, families and communities

- Launch a process to close the education gap between First Nations and other Canadian children, through First Nations control of First Nations education.
- Engage in a process with First Nations to develop a national action plan to address the root causes of violence against First Nations women and girls.

- Establish a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

2) Sharing and equitable funding

- Lift the 2 per cent cap on federal funding to First Nations.
- Establish a new fiscal relationship with First Nations.
- Commit to a multi-party process with First Nations, provinces, territories and the federal government to develop revenue sharing frameworks.
- Restore funding for First Nations organizations at all levels.

3) Upholding rights

- Establish a joint AFN-cabinet committee to monitor the implementation of First Nations-Crown priorities.
- Engage a process with First Nations to ensure the federal government is accountable to First Nations.
- Repeal Bill C-51, the government's anti-terrorism bill, and ensure that security legislation respects First Nations' rights.

4) Respecting the environment

- Establish a dialogue with First Nations on environmental protection, stewardship and sustainability.
- Repeal changes to environmental legislation and regulations introduced through Bill C-38 and Bill C-45, and work with First Nations to develop environmental and resource laws to protect the land and water.
- Apply a standard of informed consent, consistent with First Nations' fundamental rights, in any decision making that impacts First Nations lands, territories or resources.

5) Revitalizing indigenous languages

- Increase investment in efforts to revitalize indigenous languages, including immersion programs.
- Work with the AFN on a national action plan to revitalize and promote indigenous languages.
- Work with the AFN on an Indigenous Languages Act consistent with the principles in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

6) Truth and Reconciliation

- Fully adopt the principles of reconciliation provided by the TRC and work with the AFN on implementation of the Commission's calls to action.

The full plan, titled the 2015 Federal Election Priorities for First Nations and Canada, [can be found here](#).

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/afn-chief-not-voting-in-election-despite-push-to-get-aboriginals-out-to-polls-1.2545024>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Why B.C. First Nations oppose the Northern Gateway pipeline

Aboriginal groups fear the consequences if bitumen from the Alberta oilsands were to spill into the sensitive ecosystem of Great Bear Rainforest. Part of the 2015 Atkinson Series on public policy.



A humpback whale breaches the surface near Hartley Bay along the Great Bear Rainforest in British Columbia. First Nations in the region are vehemently opposed to the Northern Gateway pipeline.

By: [Gillian Steward](#) Atkinson Fellow, Published on Fri Aug 28 2015

Art Sterritt is the executive director of Coastal First Nations, an alliance of aboriginal groups in British Columbia. Though living about 1,200 kilometres west of the oilsands, Sterritt and other native leaders in the area have developed a keen interest in the production of thick black bitumen.

That's because oilsands developers and Enbridge are proposing the \$8-billion Northern Gateway pipeline be built between northern Alberta and the B.C. coast. It would move 525,000 barrels a day of diluted bitumen to Kitimat. There, it would be loaded onto tankers that would have to navigate chains of islands and narrow channels before reaching open sea en route to Asia.

The coastal First Nations in the area, known as the Great Bear Rainforest, make up the majority of the population, and they don't want the pipeline. They particularly don't want tankers full of diluted bitumen — which is much thicker than crude oil — in waters where salmon abound in a complex ecosystem that has supported their people for centuries.

“We are never going to allow pipelines as long as (the oil) can't be cleaned up,” Sterritt told an audience in Calgary in June. “We know what happened just to the north of us with the Exxon Valdez.”

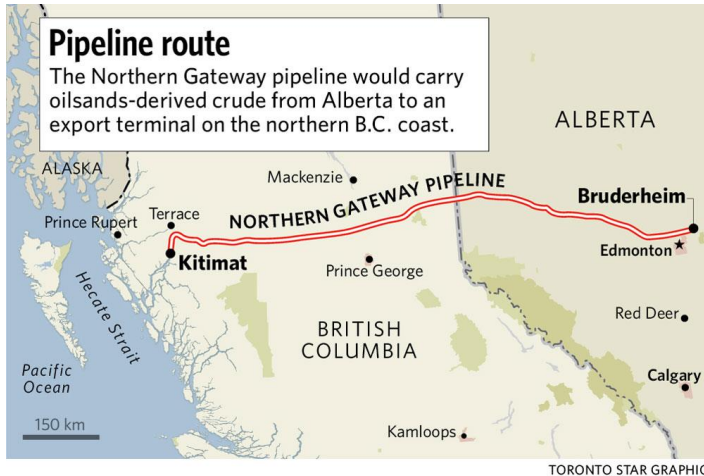


Haisla First Nation hereditary chiefs attend hearings on the proposed \$8-billion Northern Gateway pipeline in B.C. in 2012. The pipeline was eventually approved, with 209 conditions.

In March 1989, the Exxon Valdez supertanker struck Bligh Reef and spilled 11 million gallons of crude oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound. It was the worst American spill up to that point, damaging more than 2,000 kilometres of shoreline and killing hundreds of thousands of birds and marine animals and untold numbers of fish.

The Northern Gateway pipeline was the subject of extensive public hearings by the National Energy Board in 2012 and 2013, during which Sterritt's group and others registered their fears. In the end, the National Energy Board approved it with 209 conditions that must be met before it proceeds. The Harper government seconded the motion when it gave its approval a few months later.

But many doubt the pipeline will ever be built because it is the subject of 18 court cases. Enbridge has confirmed that it won't be in service by 2018, as previously predicted.



That's fine with Sterritt, who asserts that it is incumbent on the oil companies to figure out how to clean up a spill should a tanker rupture or capsize.

"So far they haven't done that," he said. "There is no technology available to clean up oil spills. They just keep telling us that the chances of a spill are very low. But that's not good enough."

According to the final report of the Northern Gateway Joint Review Panel, there is significant disagreement among experts about whether the heavy diluted bitumen would sink to the sea bottom if a tanker ruptured, making it much more difficult to clean up than if it were floating on the surface. Enbridge says the diluted bitumen would float, but intervenors from Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans testified that their studies were inconclusive.

The joint review panel decided that a spill is "not likely to sink as a continuous layer that coats the seabed or riverbed." But some of the conditions Enbridge must now meet deal with spill response and require further research on the likelihood that diluted bitumen would sink.

Meanwhile, bitumen is being transported by existing pipelines and trains. But as production at oilsands operations increases, there will be more pressure to build a pipeline such as the Northern Gateway.



Douglas Channel is the proposed end point of the Northern Gateway pipeline, which would carry 525,000 barrels a day of diluted bitumen from northern Alberta to the B.C. coast. Experts say more research is needed on the effects of an oil spill involving oilsands products.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/atkinsonseries/2015/08/28/why-bc-first-nations-oppose-the-northern-gateway-pipeline.html>

Researchers, First Nations, team to track rapidly-melting Wash. glaciers



In this Aug. 7, 2015, photo Mount Baker, Wash., is visible during a clear morning. (AP/Manuel Valdes)

Phuong Le, The Associated Press

Published Friday, August 28, 2015 8:27AM EDT

MOUNT BAKER, Wash. -- Mauri Pelto digs his crampons into the steep icy slope on Mount Baker in Washington state and watches as streams of water cascade off the thick mass of bare, bluish ice. Every 20 yards, the water carves vertical channels in the face of the glacier as it rushes downstream.

What little snow from last winter is already gone, so ice is melting off the glacier at a rate of nearly three inches a day this summer, he said.

"At the rate it's losing mass, it won't make it 50 years," said Pelto, a glaciologist who returned this month for the 32nd year to study glaciers in the North Cascades range. "This is a dying glacier," he said.



In this Aug. 7, 2015, photo Oliver Grah, a scientist for the Nooksack Indian Tribe, measures ice melt on the Sholes Glacier in Mount Baker, Wash. (AP/Manuel Valdes)

Glaciers on Mount Baker and other mountains in the North Cascades are thinning and retreating. Seven have disappeared over the past three decades, and the overall volume of glaciers in the range have lost about one-fifth of their volume.

The shrinking glaciers here mirror what is happening around the U.S. and worldwide: As the planet warms, glaciers are losing volume, some faster than others.

Two of the largest glaciers in Yosemite National Park in California have retreated over the past century, losing about two-thirds of their surface areas. In Alaska, a recent study of 116 glaciers estimated they have lost about 75 billion metric tons of ice every year from 1994 to 2013. In Montana, scientists are already seeing the impacts in increased stream temperature and changes to high-elevation ecosystems. In 1850, there were 150 glaciers at Glacier National Park; now there are 25.

"These glaciers are, from a geological standpoint, rapidly disappearing from the landscape," said Dan Fagre, a research ecologist with U.S. Geological Survey stationed in Glacier National Park. "They're so small and vulnerable that they could be gone in a matter of decades."

Glaciers --thick masses of accumulated snow that compress into ice and move -- are important indicators of climate change because they are driven by precipitation and temperature.

The glaciers on Mount Baker, a volcanic peak about 125 miles northwest of Seattle, provide a critical water source for agriculture, cities and tribes during the late summer. The icy glacial melt keeps streams cool for fish and replenishes rivers during a time of year when they typically run low.

For the Nooksack Indian Tribe, which has relied for hundreds of years on salmon runs in the glacier-fed Nooksack River, a way of life is at risk. Without that glacial runoff, rivers will dry up more quickly and warm up faster, making it harder for salmon to spawn or migrate to the ocean.

"Climate change will impact the ability of tribal members to harvest fish in the future," said Oliver Grah, water resources manager for the tribe, which has teamed up with Pelto. They want to know how glacier runoff will affect the river's hydrology and ultimately fish habitat and restoration planning.

On a recent day in August, Grah and colleague Jezra Beaulieu hiked 5 miles into the Sholes Glacier to study how climate change will influence the timing and magnitude of stream flow in the river. It's their fifth field trip to the glacier this summer, and each time they're amazed at how rapidly the snow and ice are melting.

Grah strings a measuring tape across the stream, wades in shin-deep in the fast-moving, brownish water and measures the depth of the water streaming from the toe of the glacier. He calls out numbers that Beaulieu records in a yellow notebook. They're trying to calculate how much flow and sediment is coming from the glacier.

"This is a frozen reservoir that yields water all summer long," said Pelto, a professor of environmental sciences at Nichols College in Dudley, Massachusetts. "So you take this away and what are you going to replace it with?"

The tribe also is collaborating with Western Washington University, which is using data collected in the field to model what the streamflow will be like in the future.

"The late summer flows controlled by melting glaciers are predicted to decrease as the glaciers get smaller and smaller," said Robert Mitchell, a geology professor at Western Washington University.

This year, a record low snowpack in Washington state and warmer temperatures have made it one of the worst Pelto has seen in over three decades.

"They're losing volume at a faster rate than ever before," Pelto said. "If you can't sustain a glacier at a place like this in the Lower 48 states, there's no hope."

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/researchers-first-nations-team-to-track-rapidly-melting-wash-glaciers-1.2537283>

First Nations bear the risks of oilsands development

Aboriginal communities fear environmental contamination and health problems related to oilsands mining, but say few people are listening to their concerns. Part 2 of the 2015 Atkinson Series on public policy.



Protesters in Toronto oppose plans for the Northern Gateway pipeline, which would transport diluted bitumen from the Alberta oilsands to the B.C. coast. Aboriginal communities say the Crown has failed in its constitutional duty to consult First Nations and respect treaty rights.

By: [Gillian Steward](#) Atkinson Fellow, Published on Fri Aug 28 2015

The most direct and long-term effects of carving up the land, withdrawing immense amounts of water from rivers, discharging air- and water-borne waste, and the influx of thousands of construction workers — all part of the furious pace of oilsands development — have fallen on aboriginal people and the once-remote places that have been their homes for generations.

The area around Fort McMurray, Alta., has a population of about 6,400 First Nations residents, including the Mikisew Cree First Nation, the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, the Fort McKay First Nation, the Fort McMurray No. 468 First Nation and the Chipewyan Prairie Dene First Nation. There are also seven Métis locals, which represent approximately 5,000 to 6,000 residents.

Twenty-six other First Nations groups in the Athabasca, Cold Lake and Peace River regions have reported being affected by oilsands development.

In the Cold Lake area, southeast of Fort McMurray, the Beaver Lake Cree have launched a constitutional challenge against the federal and Alberta governments claiming their treaty rights have been trampled in favour of rapid resource development. They also claim the Alberta Energy Regulator has refused them standing as intervenors and ignored the harm to wildlife, water resources and the natural condition of the land caused by the proliferation of oilsands projects in the area

If their challenge is successful in court, it could significantly curtail oilsands development.

And now that more pipelines are needed to get the bitumen to market, First Nations in other provinces are worried that they, too, will soon bear the burden of oilsands development but none of the benefits.

Melanie Dene has lived in Fort McMurray most of her life, though her family is originally from Fort Chipewyan, which clings to the shores of Lake Athabasca about 280 kilometres north of Fort McMurray and was established as a fur trading post in 1788.

These days, Dene, 35, works for the Mikisew Cree First Nation, whose members reside on several reserves in the Fort Chipewyan area. Her job involves negotiating with oilsands developers, who must consult with the aboriginal people impacted by their projects.

She often feels overwhelmed by the developers' complex, technical plans and the knowledge that their projects will always be approved by the regulators. Funding for the agency she works for is provided by oilsands project proponents, which, she says, adds to the pressure to accept their plans.



The Athabasca river, highway construction and suburbs seen from a helicopter in Fort McMurray, Alta., in July 2012. There have been significant layoffs because of the drop in oil prices, but thousands of workers have already moved to Alberta or commute across the country to get in on the high wages.

Nigel Bankes, chair of natural resources law at the University of Calgary, says the downloading of decision-making to local First Nations doesn't really satisfy the Crown's constitutional duty to consult and accommodate aboriginal and treaty rights.

"Instead, the federal government has delegated that responsibility to the provinces, and in Alberta the province has delegated it to the proponents of projects."

For Melanie Dene, the hardest part of that arrangement "is trying to explain to the proponent the impacts from a cumulative point of view. First Nations people see things in a holistic way. We know that what happens to the river in one area will affect more than just that area. But they always want to talk about specific projects; they don't want to take everything into account."

The fact that "Fort Chip," as it is commonly called, is so far away from the major oilsands projects doesn't help their cause, either. Never mind that it is downstream and the Athabasca River is a community lifeline.

It flows into Lake Athabasca, a source of water and fish for the Mikisew Cree. And locals often travel between communities by boat in the summer.

But with the pace and magnitude of oilsands development, and the worries about toxic elements going into the river, nobody in Fort Chip eats fish from the lake anymore. Dene says people just feed it to their dogs.

In Fort McKay, a Cree First Nation about 60 kilometres north of Fort McMurray and on the banks of the Athabasca River, bottled water had to be brought in for more than two years after the water treatment plant proved to be ineffective at removing some cancer-causing agents from river water.

Dr. John O'Connor practises at the Fort McKay health clinic. He says some patients complain about skin rashes after taking showers, so he advises mothers to wash their babies in bottled water.

“Even if there is not an acute danger from the water people use for bathing, washing and cooking, what about long-term exposure?” asks O'Connor. “Nobody seems to know what that might be.”

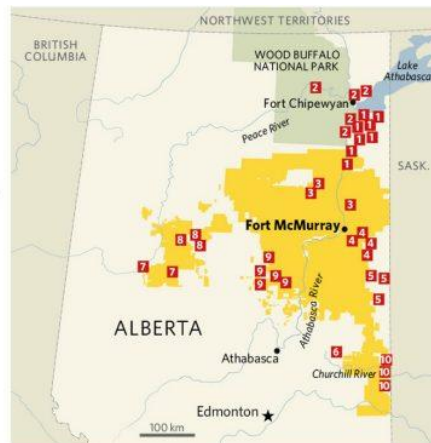
In the path of development

Thousands of First Nations and Métis people live in the regions where oilsands exploration and production have expanded.

■ Oilsands leased land
■ FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

1. Mikisew Cree
2. Athabasca Chipewyan
3. Fort McKay
4. Fort McMurray
5. Chipewyan Prairie
6. Beaver Lake Cree
7. Duncan's
8. Woodland Cree
9. Bigstone Cree
10. Cold Lake

SOURCE: First Nations in Alberta, Aboriginal Affairs Canada, 2009; asi.alberta.ca
TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC



In order to determine what might be causing the skin rashes, a series of allergy tests will soon be conducted on children who have been away from the reserve for a few weeks and show no signs of rash. They will be fitted with a patch that contains a dilution of the contaminants present in the water and air in Fort McKay. If the rash returns, it will be further evidence that the air and water are not as clean as they should be.

A few years ago, O'Connor caused a furor by speaking out about the high incidence of a rare bile duct cancer in Fort Chipewyan, where he conducted clinics for several years, and throughout the oilsands region. Health Canada physicians laid four complaints of professional misconduct against O'Connor with the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons in 2007, saying he had caused “undue alarm.”

O'Connor's name was eventually cleared after an investigation by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, and the anxiety about cancer-causing agents in the water and air lingers. Government reports about cancer rates in the area have proven inconclusive, and no studies have looked at how the cancers might have been caused.

Two years ago, 47-year-old Barbara Jewers died of bile duct cancer only four months after diagnosis. Jewers lived in Fort McMurray and had worked in the Syncrude open pit mines and the tailings ponds for more than 20 years. She was a healthy, active woman — a non-smoker and occasional drinker who loved her job and often volunteered with various social agencies. There seemed no apparent cause of the cancer other than working in oilsands extraction facilities, says O'Connor.

During the six months after Jewers' death, six people in Fort Chipewyan (pop. 1,100) received a cancer diagnosis, including another with bile duct cancer. This summer, a 58-year-old woman from Fort Chipewyan died from bile duct cancer. She was the seventh person from that small community to be stricken by the rare disease.

"If Fort McMurray was downstream from the oilsands plants, there would be much more of an uproar," says Melanie Dene. "But it's not, so nobody else but the First Nations seems to care about the water in the river."



The Athabasca River flows downstream from oilsands extraction projects through the Fort McKay First Nation. The community relies on bottled water, and some residents complain of skin rashes after taking showers.

If you stand on the riverbank in Fort McKay and look south to the horizon, you can see huge emission stacks belching murky clouds. There is a sour smell in the air. Some formerly white older houses on the reserve have a pale yellowy coat. Inside the houses a fine dust settles on everything day after day.

"We're always dusting," says Lina Gallup, who is 83 and one of the band's elders.

Sometimes the smell outside is so strong, residents stay indoors.

The band has installed its own air monitoring system, but Alvaro Pinto, who heads the reserve's environmental sustainability department, says the community doesn't get enough information from government agencies and industry about what is in the air and what constitutes a danger point.

According to Pinto, there was an especially strong smell of sulphur last October.

“People start calling here to find out what is going on ... Should they stay indoors, evacuate? We can check our monitoring station, but we have no information from either industry or the Alberta Energy Regulator about whether there has been a serious incident at one of the oilsands plants. When we ask, they simply say, ‘We are investigating.’”

The band had made similar inquiries six months earlier, but when they asked for an update in light of the latest incident, industry, the AER, Alberta Health Services and Alberta Environment did not provide any more information or a strategy to deal with such situations.

“Somebody has to tell us we have a problem so we can take action to protect the 700 people, including elders and babies, who live here,” says Pinto.

“Who is responsible to tell us to evacuate? Is it Alberta Health Services, the chief medical officer for the region? It shouldn’t be on us to figure it out.

“I warned them that someone will go to jail if there is a serious incident.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/atkinsonseries/2015/08/28/first-nations-bear-the-risks-of-oilsands-development.html>

Northwestern B.C. First Nations set up camp to halt LNG project

Company, province won’t respond to questions on possible investigation of alternate site

By Gordon Hoekstra, Vancouver Sun August 27, 2015



Looking across Flora Bank at low tide to the Pacific Northwest LNG site on Lelu Island, in the Skeena River Estuary near Prince Rupert.

Members of northern B.C. First Nations have set up a camp on Lelu Island near Prince Rupert to prevent its use as a liquefied natural gas terminal.

Lax Kw'alaams member Joey Wesley said in a phone interview they made the move because Pacific NorthWest LNG was getting ready to drill on the island and in the ocean.

He said they also had learned the company was going to remove eelgrass from salmon-rearing habitat at Flora Bank off of Lelu Island in an effort to see if it could be transplanted elsewhere in the Skeena River estuary.

A planned bridge to the island, and its pilings, would traverse the edge of the bank.

As many as 20 people — including from the Gitksan, Haida, Nisga'a and Lake Babine First Nations, as well as non-native people — were on the island Wednesday, said Wesley.

“We are exercising our aboriginal rights and title,” he said. “Our intention is to make our presence felt, and for however long it takes.”

The terminal and its pipeline has been viewed as a leading project in the Christy Clark-led Liberal government's efforts to start a new natural gas export industry to Asia.

The \$36-billion project — led by Malaysian state-controlled Petronas — has been approved by the province but is mired in a federal review that stalled because of concerns over the project's effects on Flora Bank.

Earlier this year, the Lax Kw'alaams rejected a \$1.15-billion benefits package from the company and B.C. government over similar concerns.

Wesley said the Lelu Island site is a traditional-use area of his father, hereditary chief Donny Wesley, or Sm'oogyet Yahaan.

In a YouTube video posted by the SkeenaWild Conservation Trust, the hereditary chief said they were there to tell the people of Canada and British Columbia they were not giving up Flora Bank and want Lelu Island to remain intact. “If you take away the fish, then you take away the people. It's as simple as that,” said the hereditary chief, referring to the importance of Flora Bank to salmon rearing.

The Lax Kw'alaams said in a message to its members on Monday they have been working on an alternate site.

Lax Kw'alaams mayor Garry Reece and other elected leaders have not responded to interview requests this week.

Pacific NorthWest LNG declined to respond to questions from The Vancouver Sun about the presence of First Nation protesters on the island, its planned drilling work or investigation of an alternate site.

However, in a written statement, spokesman Spencer Sproule said Thursday the company has presented a concept to area First Nations and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans to transplant eelgrass from Porpoise Channel to partly offset habitat impacts from its proposed project. The channel is near Flora Bank.

Sproule said the company had engaged two world-leading restoration scientists on the proposal. "No on-the-ground work has or will take place unless the concept is approved by the Government of Canada."

Earlier in the week, Pacific NorthWest LNG president Michael Culbert told Business in Vancouver they were exploring modifications to the site, not an alternate location.

The B.C. Ministry of Natural Gas Development also declined to respond to The Sun's questions on whether they were involved with the investigation for an alternate site, saying only that discussions are confidential.

Michael Gurney, a spokesman for the Prince Rupert Port Authority, which administers land on Lelu Island, said drilling is meant to provide information for engineering of the project and has been sanctioned by the elected leadership of the Lax Kw'alaams and other First Nations in the area, including the Metlakatla.

Direct Link:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/Northwestern+First+Nations+camp+halt+project/11322548/story.html>

Nunavut says new muskox rules reflect science, Inuit knowledge

Redrawing of management zones will be 'a lot better' for hunters, says Deputy Minister Gabriel Nirlungayuk

[CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 02, 2015 4:42 PM CT Last Updated: Sep 02, 2015 4:42 PM CT



The Government of Nunavut has made changes to muskox regulations. This muskox was spotted grazing near Grise Fiord, Nunavut, earlier this year. (submitted by Joanne Dignard)

The Nunavut Government has changed some of its muskox regulations, including shifting the boundaries for management zones and changing the total allowable harvests for muskoxen in some parts of the territory.

Deputy Minister of Environment Gabriel Nirlungayuk says the government decided on the changes after consulting surveys and taking into account Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (traditional knowledge).

"I think it will be a lot better for those communities that want to do muskox harvests," said Nirlungayuk. "A lot of these recommendations came from them."



Gabriel Nirlungayuk, the deputy minister of environment for the Government of Nunavut, says these changes will be "a lot better" for the communities. (Jordan Konek/CBC)

This is the first time that the government has changed muskox regulations since Nunavut separated from the Northwest Territories in 1999.

Nirlungayuk says that, since the 1960s, muskox populations have significantly rebounded because of heavy harvesting restrictions.

"Using the science and traditional knowledge, it now better reflects how the muskox have made a good comeback."

The 13 management zones incorporate communities in all three regions; eight of the zones have a yearly total allowable harvest ranging from 15 to 400 animals.

The boundary changes also incorporate buffer zones.

"Kugaaruk just as an example used to have to go over to Gjoa Haven area. Now within their area if they see muskox, they don't have to travel as far."

For details on specific changes, hunters should contact their local wildlife officer or hunters and trappers organization.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavut-says-new-muskox-rules-reflect-science-inuit-knowledge-1.3213173>

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 'sad' to lose EU seal ban legal challenge

'We don't have the deep pockets like the animal rights groups and that's what's maddening,' says ITK President

By Elyse Skura, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 04, 2015 3:00 AM CT Last Updated: Sep 04, 2015 6:06 AM CT



With yesterday's decision, the legal appeal of the European Union's seal ban is now over. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President Terry Audla says Inuit will try to expand for market for seal products in other ways, 'but it's disheartening to see the rest of the world trying to diminish that based on morality.' (Canadian Press)

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's president says he is 'sad, but not surprised' that the European Union's top court has [dismissed an appeal of the EU's ban](#) on imported seal products.

Yesterday, the Court of Justice of the European Union announced that it had dismissed a legal appeal from ITK and a group of hunters and other sealing advocates, who argued that the ban is unlawful.

"We don't have the deep pockets like the animal rights groups and that's what's maddening about this," said ITK President Terry Audla.

"It angers me that whoever has the deepest pockets can actually influence legislation. That's just not right."

Last May, the [World Trade Organization's appellate body upheld a decision](#) that linked the trade ban to moral objections against the seal hunt.



Terry Audla, the president of ITK, says 'we'll have to look at how we can work with that system, how we can work with the exemption and how we can get Inuit to capitalize on that.' (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

"The legislation on the ban of seal products in the EU is not fair to the Inuit in Canada and we felt that the decision to legislate was not based on science," Audla said.

'What we do is humane'

Now, he says Inuit will have to work with the European Union's exemptions for hunts certified as being conducted by indigenous people.

In August, Nunavut announced the [EU had accepted the territory's application](#) to be accepted under the exemption.

"The Northwest Territories Government, in conjunction with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation should be working towards what the Nunavut government has done," said Audla.

"But at the same time the Inuit in Canada have to work together to make sure the licensing process is something that we can live with."

He says it will also be important for Inuit groups to work together to better market products, "so that the demand is actually brought up to the levels where Inuit could use this as serious means as being able to provide for one's self."

While Inuit work within the constraints of the European Union's policies, Audla hopes that Asian markets will remain open.

"What we do is humane. It's very green. It's not a detriment to the environment in any way, nor to the species of seals involved."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-tapiriit-kanatami-sad-to-lose-eu-seal-ban-legal-challenge-1.3215066>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Editorial: Work together for LNG benefits

Times Colonist

August 29, 2015 12:43 AM

A proposal to build a floating liquefied natural gas plant in Saanich Inlet has taken the surrounding communities by surprise. No word of the project was heard until the Malahat First Nation and Steelhead LNG Corp. announced their intention to proceed.

Taken with Steelhead's other proposal for a plant near Port Alberni, the project near Bamberton would present significant problems and important opportunities.

The Malahat deal has numerous obstacles to overcome, not least the opposition of neighbouring First Nations who weren't consulted. And it would be difficult to find a less suitable location for this plant than an already polluted inlet.

And yet the Island's aboriginal communities have a case. Indeed, they have a morally unanswerable case.

Infant mortality rates among status Indians on Vancouver Island are 37 per cent above the provincial average. Aboriginal teen pregnancies are on a par with Third World countries. High school reading scores are poor; so are graduation rates.

Unemployment is rampant, incomes are far below the rest of B.C. and incidence rates for chronic diseases such as diabetes are off the chart. It is an uncomfortable fact to face, but our Island is a tale of two cultures, one thriving and the other in desperate poverty.

Economic development could be a partial solution, and LNG is an option worth pursuing.

Steelhead LNG also has an agreement with the Huu-ay-aht First Nation near Bamfield to build an LNG port on their land. The \$30-billion project would involve construction of a terminal to ship liquefied natural gas overseas.

This also poses environmental risks, as does any major industrial development. The facility would be located at the extreme end of a peninsula overlooking Barkley Sound.

This is one of the most beautiful and unspoiled regions on the West Coast. Yet the processing plant, if it comes to fruition, would produce 24 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas each year. A fleet of oceangoing ships would be required to service the facility.

In a choice between Saanich Inlet and Bamfield, there is little room for argument. It makes far more sense, ecologically and geographically, to locate an LNG facility at a remote site on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

In addition, the economic benefits of this vastly larger project at Bamfield would be felt throughout the entire mid-Island corridor, from Port Alberni to Campbell River.

That region has been hit hard by job losses in the forestry and fishing sectors. A major new industry would breathe life into dozens of communities, many of them with large numbers of First Nations families.

Phrased in these terms, this can be made to sound like a win/lose proposition. The Huu-ay-aht win, the Malahat lose.

But it need not be so. It should be possible to structure the Bamfield agreement in such a way that many of the Island's First Nations share the economic benefits and spinoffs.

That will take diplomacy and co-operation. But an LNG plant on the West Coast that has broad support from aboriginal leaders across the Island has a much greater chance of gaining the approval of regulators.

A facility in Saanich Inlet facing almost united opposition is a far riskier proposition.

Both of these schemes are still in the early stages. Nothing is set in stone.

But this is an occasion for First Nations to work together on plans that could create widespread economic benefits.

See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-work-together-for-lng-benefits-1.2044318#sthash.HfdzEfU1.dpuf>

B.C. courts deny First Nations' Site C stop-work order and dismiss judicial review

By Derrick Penner, Vancouver Sun August 28, 2015



Artist conception of Site C dam in the Peace River region.

Courts on Friday dismissed three actions against BC Hydro's \$9-billion Site C dam project, although the utility still faces additional legal challenges that have yet to be decided.

In one action, a B.C. Supreme Court judge dismissed an application filed by the West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations seeking an injunction to block site-preparation work, said BC Hydro spokesman David Conway.

The First Nations sought the injunction over concerns about the environmental impact of the work, particularly on eagle nests and beaver dams in the path of flooding from the project.

However, while the application was dismissed, the First Nations were satisfied with elements of the decision, considering that they have a separate action before B.C. Supreme Court seeking a judicial review of construction permits issued by the province, which has yet to be decided.

In a news release, the First Nations noted that BC Hydro agreed not to act on any of its permits in the Moberly River valley until the outcome of that case.

In the statement, Prophet River First Nation Chief Lynett Tsakoza said she believes the decision "is clear recognition of the unique ecological significance of the (Moberly River) valley."

"We are looking forward to having our day in court to address the legality of the construction permits, an issue that the court today acknowledged is a 'serious issue' to be heard."

Additionally, BC Hydro said the Federal Court dismissed applications seeking judicial review of the federal environmental approval of the Site C project by the Peace Valley Landowners Association and the West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations.

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/courts+deny+First+Nations+Site+stop+work+order+dismiss+judicial+review/11324788/story.html#ixzz3kQZFvM7G>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Tracey-Mae Chambers' bloody, fleshy art conjures 'discarded' aboriginal women

'Mine is but a tear in a river' exhibit offers provocative artifacts to make people 'face brutal truths'

[CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 02, 2015 12:00 PM ET Last Updated: Sep 03, 2015 5:54 AM ET



In her latest exhibit, "Mine is but a tear in a river", Simcoe-based artist Tracey-Mae Chambers transforms items of clothing using wax-based paints to look bloodied by violence. The pieces were strewn and then photographed in rivers, on old mattresses —and even at Queen's Park and the Supreme Court of Canada — to draw attention to the country's missing and murdered Aboriginal women. (Tracey-Mae Chambers/Twitter)

A new art exhibit coming to the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation on Manitoulin Island dares you to look away.

With her bloody, visceral photos, Simcoe-based artist Tracy-Mae Chambers is trying to raise awareness about violence against Canada's missing, murdered and ["discarded"](#) aboriginal women — facts she calls ["brutal truths"](#).



Tracey-Mae Chambers, the artist behind "Mine is but a tear in a river", wants people to face what she calls "brutal truths" about Canada's 1181 missing and murdered Aboriginal women. (CBC)

Chambers melts a wax-based paint and works it into items of women's clothing to portray fleshy wounds.

"I wanted to make sure that it didn't represent skin, because I'm trying to elicit the understanding that the common denominator is flesh, is blood, is those things," she explained. "It isn't skin colour, it isn't eye colour, it isn't hair colour, and yet that's somehow, that's how we look at the world."

Chambers then photographs the clothing strewn in different places — including Queen's Park, and the Supreme Court of Canada.

There is one photo for each of the 1,181 missing or murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

Chambers said she was motivated to create the symbolic artifacts when someone close to her questioned the humanity of the women.

"Oh, I thought these women were drug addicts and prostitutes, so really what does it matter?!", Chambers recounts of the conversation. "I've never felt so angry in my life."

The exhibit opens Sept. 9 at the Ojibwe Cultural Centre in M'Chigeeng.

To hear the complete interview with Tracey-Mae Chambers, listen [here](#).

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/tracey-mae-chambers-bloody-fleshy-art-conjures-discarded-aboriginal-women-1.3212651>

Special Topic: Residential Schools & '60s Scoop

Justice on a roll

Samantha WRIGHT ALLEN / Prince George Citizen
August 27, 2015 09:06 PM



The Rolling Justice Bus made a stop in Prince George Thursday. - Brent Braaten, Photographer

A busload of people are trying to pave the road to reconciliation for Canada's historical abuses of aboriginal people one conversation and one community at a time.

The Rolling Justice Bus passed through Prince George Thursday, halfway through its eight-day tour of the province in an effort to start addressing some of the 94 recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, published in June.

Janet Gray helped organize the tour as the regional representative for KAIROS BC, a coalition of churches focused on ecological justice and human rights.

"We are specifically very interested in reconciliation and finding ways in which we can stand in solidarity with First Nations people and work at changing the relationships we've had with First Nations as settlers or white people in Canada," she said, also referencing the history of churches and the residential schools "which we are not proud of."

On Thursday morning, the group of almost 20 stood in a circle at the intersection of Highway 97 and Highway 16, known also as the Highway of Tears.

After a moment of silence, Gray read the names of woman after woman, all missing or murdered.

Then the group placed make-shift paper hearts in the ground in front of Mr. PG, each bearing a woman's name or words like "hope" and "justice" scrawled in highlighter.

Much of the stops between Vancouver and Fort St. John are about consulting with communities, Gray said.

"We can't say what the most important issue is for aboriginals," said Gray who, like most on the bus, is non-aboriginal.

"A lot of us are settlers who are trying to raise awareness amongst non-aboriginal Canadians.

"We're creating connections and opportunity for dialogue," Gray said.

Those connections are important to Brenda Wilson John, Highway of Tears coordinator for Carrier Sekani Family Services.

"It's overwhelming," said Wilson John after addressing the group.

"Just the support, more people are recognizing and understanding what we're going through. It brings a comfort to me."

Wilson John has been raising awareness about the disproportionate danger aboriginal women face since her sister Ramona Wilson went missing in 1994. Her body was found 10 months later in Smithers.

"Her murderer is still out there so there is no justice in her case. That is a constant thought that runs through your mind every day," she said.

Last year, an RCMP report showed more than 1,100 aboriginal women have faced that fate in the last three decades.

"It's devastating. Every time a young lady goes missing or is murdered it brings back memories of my sister."

It's been 11 years since Amnesty International released its first research report on missing and murdered indigenous women.

It didn't occur to the group to call for a national inquiry then, said Don Wright, regional activism coordinator.

"Part of the idea is first of course acknowledging past injustices, but what are we doing about it now?" said Wright, adding it's important the organization get outside of the Lower Mainland to help focus its activism efforts.

"For us it's an intersection of indigenous rights, issues around corporate accountability, and public indifference, police inaction and... people just don't understand the lack of political will around these issues to actually address them in a coherent way," Wright said.

Wright said people have a responsibility to help encourage action.

"Their voices have been silenced or dismissed and so for us as allies it's about making space for those voices and a trip like this helps us be better informed about those issues in order to talk to our fellow settlers."

For video from The Citizen's interview with the Rolling Justice Bus crew, go online to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JocUf7LN7og

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/justice-on-a-roll-1.2043328#sthash.rNd3pcmB.dpuf>

Brantford school a key tool in 150-year effort to assimilate First Nations children

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission spent years examining what was described as an attempted 'cultural genocide.'



The cafeteria area in Brantford residential school including one of the wooden paddle used to mix the mush that the children were given to eat for all three meals of the day. The lids for the mush pots can be seen in the background.

Hamilton Spectator

By [Bill Dunphy](#), Aug 29, 2015

The school sits well back from Mohawk Road, at the end of a driveway that passes through a rolling lawn and the remains of a 150-year-old apple orchard.

It was once a substantial Edwardian edifice — a big brick pile fronted by a circular drive, with soaring columns supporting a three storey porch at its entrance, columns that raised the eye to the neat row of gables punctuating a short, sharp roof — all of it topped off by a grand cupola.

Today, the pillars and the upper porches are gone, the roof is in tatters, and whole sections of soffit have rotted and fallen away. Half the rooms are empty and many unused and likely unusable.

But for 66 years it housed the Mohawk Institute, Canada's first residential school. The current building, opened in 1904, is the third incarnation of an Anglican project, which for 138 years, served as a school and forced home for a combination of local kids from Six Nations and students from other aboriginal, Inuit and Métis communities.

It also served as key tool in a concerted 150-year effort to assimilate First Nations children into white European Christian culture — a practice bluntly labelled "attempted cultural genocide" by Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin.

Cultural genocide is also the term used by the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) in its [400-page summary report](#) issued earlier this year.

"States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and ... families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next.

"In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things."

Stole their land, took away their livelihood, crushed their religions and their cultures. Canada — its leaders, its churches and its governments — did all of these things. In all of our names.

The Mohawk Institute is not a national historic site, no residential schools are, but arguably it should be. We all have a lot to learn from this history.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) spent seven years examining the bitter living legacy of Canada's residential school system. The three commissioners operated under tight guidelines imposed by a historic 2007 settlement negotiated by school survivor organizations with the federal government and the religious operators of the 130 residential schools. The schools were mostly operated by the Roman Catholic Church, although other Christian denominations, like the Anglican Church of Canada operated a handful of the schools, including the Mohawk Institute.

The reports issued by the TRC to date (the full reports are slated for release by summer's end, make for horrifying reading.

Residential Schools: A compressed history

Children were forcibly removed from their homes, their traditional clothes and footwear confiscated, their hair hacked off; they were forbidden to speak their language, and beaten when they did.

Worse, the children were preyed upon by the people who were supposed to care for and teach them — astonishing numbers of students were physically and sexually abused.

About 150,000 children went through the residential school system, some 80,000 of whom are alive today. Out of those 80,000, [nearly half have applied for compensation](#) for "sexual or serious physical abuse." Half. With 32,000 claims resolved, the former students have received more than \$2.8 billion in compensation to date.

Students in residential schools weren't just abused, they also died, and at a much faster rate than other Canadian children. They even died more often than native children not forced into the residential school system.

They died from diseases like tuberculosis and influenza that swept through overcrowded, ill-ventilated school dormitories. Forty of them died in fires.



This space behind a wall is where younger boys would hide from older ones. Artifacts such as blankets, marbles and checker pieces were found there after the school closed.

And there were a lot of fires — more than 200, according to the TRC, some set by angry students themselves. Fifty-three schools were destroyed by fires, including the two first versions of the Mohawk Institute.

Some schools were better than others and many students reported positive, helpful school experiences, especially during the latter decades of the program. Indeed, the commission devotes an entire chapter of their reports to the positive memories that some former students and staff offered.

But those good experiences are tainted by the program's overriding goal of cultural genocide, which was outlined baldly in government documents and parliamentary debates of the day. And they are completely overshadowed by the horrors that were unleashed.

Overall, the commission wrote: "Many children were fed a substandard diet and given a substandard education, and worked too hard. For far too long, they died in tragically high numbers. Discipline was harsh and unregulated; abuse was rife and unreported. It was, at best, institutionalized child neglect."

Students who went through the residential school system don't call themselves "alumni" or "former students" — they call themselves "survivors."

"There are bodies out there," Ivan Bomberry says, standing in one of the Mohawk Institute's nicer rooms; part of the building that's now used as offices for the [Woodland Centre](#), which is devoted to advancing native culture. Bomberry is a tour guide, a slightly stout man whose slow smile, silver-white hair and moustache, offer a sharp contrast to the stories that roll off his tongue on his tour.

He normally runs tours for schoolchildren. On this hot June day, he's sending chills up the spines of a pair of journalists.

"They're buried in the fields. They died and (school officials) just took some of them out back and buried them in the ground.

"We don't know how many."

Although there has been no definitive evidence of unmarked graves found on the site, despite searches with ground penetrating radar and even dowsing back in 2011, Bomberry's assertion is not wholly incredible.

The commission's report puts the number of named and confirmed dead at something over 4,100, but says the true number is probably closer to 6,000 and may never be known because of poor record keeping, the routine destruction of old files, and because the commission has been denied access to some files.

But while all the deaths may never be documented, other horrors have been, by multiple living witnesses.

During the tour Bomberry, pauses in a hallway running between the boys' side of the school and the girls' side.

It's an unremarkable stretch of institutional architecture, a short length of heavily painted cinder block running through the basement of the 110-year-old school. There are doors at either end — big heavy doors with inset windows.

"This room (hallway) was, you could call it, the Fight Club." Boys would be put in there to fight each other, Bomberry explained, and they wouldn't let them out until one of them had beaten the other.

"One survivor told me that she came here after her brother had been fighting and the walls were covered, just covered in blood."



Classrooms were located in the school's basement. In this particular area, rope was wrapped around the four vertical beams to create a makeshift boxing ring. Children who didn't get along were placed there to fight out their differences.

Not all of the horrors of the residential schools involve physical harm, in fact most don't. Rather, say survivors, it was the deliberate denigration of their culture, the breaking of the family bonds, the unrelenting message that they were worthless.

"Part of our healing is throwing off the feelings that colonialism has left behind: feelings of not being worthy, not being as good as others — that is also a legacy of the schools," says former Ontario ombudsman Roberta Jamieson.

Jamieson, who was also the first aboriginal woman to earn a law degree in Canada, attended day school on Six Nations, not a residential school.

Jamieson said others in her family attended residential schools and the harm survives to this day.

"The reality is that the impact (of residential schools) is intergenerational and I can testify to that — it's intergenerational for those of us who know about it.

"For those of us who know about it ..." If you're part of the dominant culture, the full corrosive power of the assimilation message is essentially invisible. But to those snatched from their homes and delivered into these institutions, it was a powerful force: your ways are worthless.

This was a continual drum beat, the insistent lesson taught in classes, in daily religious services, in the removal of their names for numbers, in the shapeless, inadequate uniforms they were forced to wear, in the mean meals they were fed: the Indian ways were worthless and you were doomed to life of poverty and isolation, unless you adopted the white man's ways.

Make Indians into functioning productive members of white, Christian society and all the other problems go away.

This last view was sincerely — and likely broadly — held by, not just government bureaucrats and religious leaders, but by many if not most Canadians of the 19th and 20th centuries. Inevitably, that warped, if sincere, view was yoked to the growing colony's desire for land and resources. The residential schools seemed like the perfect solution to what was often openly referred to as "the Indian problem."

Timeline: The Mohawk Institute

In one oft-quoted letter, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott even referred to the residential school program as "the final solution." But while the terminology finds a terrible echo in the Nazi party policies that would arise in Germany a decade or so later, Canada's residential school program owes more to British workhouses and charitable efforts to house and train the flood tide of orphans and desperately poor thrown off by the accelerating engine of the 19th century Industrial Revolution.

Indeed, Canada did create residential schools for our orphans and delinquents and destitute youth, albeit only a handful in a couple of cities. The difference is "students" in those schools were united not by culture or heritage, but by poverty and their lack of value to the growing industrialized society. Those children were the targets of the change — not their whole families, religions and cultures.

Today, the majority of First Nations people live "off" reserves, and in Canada's cities. Jo Ann Greene is one of them, she grew up in Stoney Creek.

"I was raised urban. Even though we had connections back to the reserve, I wasn't raised there."

But even as a teenager at Saltfleet High School, she was keenly aware of the differences between the choices and chances life offered her relatives on the reserve and those offered her mostly white peers.

A quick primer: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) (TRC) was created as part of the 2007 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, which was itself forged to resolve a series of class-action lawsuits between survivors of Canada's residential schools and the governments that funded and directed the schools and the churches that operated them.

(A [process of financial compensation](#) for survivors of the residential school system and for victims of specific sexual and serious physical abuse runs parallel to, but separate from the work of the TRC. To date, about \$4.71 billion in general and specific compensation has been paid out.)

The [commission's mandate](#), to oversimplify, is to: expose the oft-times sordid truth of the 150-year history of Canada's Indian residential school program and its impacts; document and preserve those findings; and finally make recommendations based on their work.

That work, the commission says, "is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. This is a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in mutual recognition and respect that will forge a brighter future. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation."

The [commission consists of three people](#): a chairman - The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, who is chair, and commissioners Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild. They direct the work of commission staff and a secretariat attached to the federal government.

During their five years of work they have: held a series of national public events; received the personal stories of thousands of school survivors — some in public events; conducted and are publishing research from public and church records; fought legal battles for access to those records; and created repositories to preserve their research for future public and scholarly access.

On June 3, they presented a [393-page summary of their findings](#), including [94 wide-ranging recommendations](#). They are expected to release the full six-volume report later this summer.

Sources: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Independent Assessment Process

Jean Chrétien's 1969 White Paper calling for the abolition of the Indian Act and the end to any special status for Indians kick-started her interest in the structural, societal roots of the problems and paths to solutions.

"I wanted to know how the system worked, and how things got the way they did, so wrongly."

Greene set off on a path that led her to work as a journalist at the Stoney Creek News ("I sat there seething by myself,") back to university where she earned both a master's degree and, when she was in her 50s, a law degree.

Her passion for change drove her to Six Nations where she became their director of land and resources while doing seminal research on matrimonial rights on First Nations. It was there that she joined the interim Truth and Reconciliation Commission under its interim CEO, Bob Watts, also of Six Nations.

"When we started there, there was nothing but the (class action settlement) agreement — nothing else. Our job was to figure out what the settlement meant, to make concrete something that wasn't there yet."

The small team leaned on similar work already underway in other parts of the world, in South Africa, in Peru. And they helped the commission develop its early focus on listening, on witnessing and set about making that happen.

"One man said, when he was five years old, he appropriately addressed the priest, (but) in his own language. The priest grabbed him by the ears, dragged him by the ears, and beat him unconscious. And he went on to sexually abuse him in the back room.

"If this was your child, what would you do? How would you feel? This happened to seven generations of our people."

The loss goes beyond identity, Greene says. Even without the physical and sexual abuse, the neglect has scarred generations. Raised in an institution that had more in common with a prison than a family, "some of them don't know who to express love to their children. Have never known how."

Reading the commission's reports — learning some of the great and hidden shame that courses through our collective history — is not entirely a journey of hopelessness and despair.

Because one of the things that emerges is that the policy failed.

First Nations cultures were deeply damaged — and some lost forever, others sliding into that chasm even now, it's true — but just the same First Nations people are, and have been for a very long time, building their future.

After decades of government-focused work, Jamieson is now the executive director of Indispire, a foundation that raise money for First Nations education. They've raised \$79 million and provided 25,000 bursaries, spending \$14 million to provide 5,000 bursaries last year alone.

"I don't want people to be overcome with guilt, or indeed paralyzed by some sense of what I would call moral bankruptcy. ... Yes, this is a chapter in our shared history in

which indigenous people were treated this way and it was government policy ... that's a fact, that's a part of our history," Jamieson says.

"I think openness is key — patience and understanding — if we want to build a positive relationship (between First Nations and the rest of Canada) it will take patience, openness, and understanding."

Jamieson says she has seen a change in Canada in recent years. She points out that much of her foundation's funding comes from corporations, typically a very conservative, cautious lot who trail, not lead deliberate societal change. Something is happening.

"I am seeing among Canadians a new willingness, an openness. This is an opportunity and let's not decide that the challenge is too overwhelming, I can't touch it ... change is possible in our life times, it will take patience; change doesn't just happen, it takes work."

You could start by visiting the Woodland Cultural Centre and their museum, by taking a tour of the old school building.

You might meet Bomberly, guiding tours through the empty, echoing rooms, bringing old ghosts to life because most of us still don't know they exist or why.

"I think (visitors) need to hear what happened here, in Canada. This was the best kept secret in Canada. Those lads that passed away, I'm telling their stories for them."

BY THE NUMBERS

Indian Residential Schools

132

Years since the formal federal system was launched.

130

Residential schools operated over the years.

1996

The last school closed.

150,000

The number of children estimated to have gone through the residential school system.

80,000

Estimated number of living residential school survivors.

79,286

Survivors received general compensation from a compensation fund

23,902

Were ineligible for general compensation

\$1.62 billion

Paid out in general compensation as of March 31, 2015

32,196

Claims for compensation for sexual or serious physical abuse accepted, 5,772 pending as of May 31, 2015

\$2.81 billion

Paid out in compensation for sexual or serious physical abuse.

4,100

Children confirmed to have died in residential schools, although the TRC estimates that number could top 6,000 as more information becomes available.

Direct Link: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/5819679-brantford-school-a-key-tool-in-150-year-effort-to-assimilate-first-nations-children/>

Blaming Sir John A. impedes reconciliation process

Lindy Mechefske

Wednesday, September 2, 2015 7:26:58 EDT PM



Sir John A. Macdonald

Timothy Tyson, American writer, academic and historian, theorizes: "If there is to be reconciliation, first there must be truth."

Canada, it appears, is at the truth-telling stage, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that we are emerging from denial. Reconciliation is yet to come.

In fact, the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which drew to a close on June 15, examined one single issue, the painful legacy of those who attended the former Indian Residential Schools. The boarding schools, run by Christian churches and funded by the federal government, were designed to assimilate native Canadians (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) into colonial Canada. The first schools predate Confederation and the last residential school closed in 1996. In all, approximately 150,000 native Canadian children were placed in the schools over 160 years. As many as 4,000 children died while attending residential schools and thousands more were starved and/or physically, sexually and emotionally abused. All 150,000 children were deprived of their families.

The truths about the darker sides of Canada's past are progressively entering the realm of our collective conscience. There are our missing and murdered indigenous women; the deeply held, widely spread covert racism towards First Nations, Inuit and Metis people; our apartheid system based on Canada's Indian Act that includes legislation pertaining to both residential school and Indian reserves; and the clearing of the Prairie provinces and starvation of the Plains Indians.

Of late, much has been made of Sir John A. Macdonald's culpability in the starvation of the indigenous people of the Plains. Macdonald's national dream required clearing the land across the Prairies in preparation for the laying of the railway tracks and settlement by Europeans. Thus began the final collapse of the bison herds -- great herds of buffalo that had roamed the Prairie heartland of North America since time immemorial and that had sustained the native people as both a source of food and cultural dynamic. Bison, believed to have been the biggest population of large wild animals on the planet, once numbered an estimated 50 million. Within decades of the arrival of European settlers on both sides of the North American border, all that remained of the bison were huge piles of bones, bleaching white in the intense Prairie sun. The last hunt took place in 1879.

Just as the last bison disappeared, the government cut rations and sent the aboriginal people inferior, tainted food supplies that were unfit to eat. (William James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 2013.) Under treaties signed with the First Nations, the government had promised not only food, but also seeds and help with starting crops. When a series of weather events and insect plagues saw the crops fail, widespread malnutrition, famine, illness and starvation ensued. In the five years following the collapse of the bison herds, it is estimated that approximately three thousand indigenous people starved to death in the Northwest Territories (Conrad and Finkel, *History of the Canadian Peoples, 1867 to the Present*, 2005), a conservative number since the area affected expanded beyond the Northwest Territories and deaths by disease were not included in the toll.

It was a horrifying and desperate situation exacerbated by a lack of aid from the government, which was dealing with massive cost overruns on the Canadian Pacific Railway. And while Macdonald stands accused of deliberately starving the indigenous

population in order to clear the Plains, the Liberals in opposition complained that the government was spending too much on "Indians," and turning them into permanent dependents. (Richard Gwyn, "Canada's First Scapegoat," *The Walrus*, 2014)

If Macdonald had not been at the helm, we would simply have had another scapegoat, quite likely one with more extreme views. As it was, Canadians voted for Macdonald over and over again, six times in all. In fact, the prevailing state of social consciousness at the time meant that Canadians one and all stood by while disease and starvation decimated the First Nations people of the Plains, along with the Metis. And elsewhere around the world, as global migration opened up new frontiers in a colonial world, similarly horrendous atrocities played out elsewhere.

It is easy to make a culprit of one man. It facilitates our ongoing denial. It eases our burden very neatly. After all, we are talking about the collective actions of ancestors we never even knew. Macdonald is far from blameless. But laying the blame entirely on Macdonald lacks honesty. He was complex and flawed, but he was neither a dictator nor an extremist. There were premiers and cabinet ministers, opposition leaders, members of Parliament, and the population at large -- all strangely silent. And yet we have chosen to level the blame at one man alone.

When we think of South Africa, we don't assign the blame for apartheid to one leader; we recognize the truth, that racial segregation and apartheid policies were supported by both politicians and by the masses. It is time we face a similar truth about ourselves and the apartheid that still exists in Canada, and seek a more ethical way forward.

Macdonald should be remembered for many things. He was instrumental in creating Canada -- a nation that would likely not exist today had it not been for his shrewd negotiating skills and foresight. He gave us the Northwest Mounted Police. And though it came at an unforgivable cost to the indigenous people and the workers who built it, Macdonald was the visionary behind the creation of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He fought for the vote for women before any other leader in the world. In 1885, he proposed to extend the vote to Canada's First Nations people. Incredibly, it wasn't until 1960 that Prime Minister John Diefenbaker pushed the aboriginal voting rights legislation through Parliament.

We cannot change what has already happened. And using a contemporary yardstick to judge the actions of the past is not particularly useful. Humans, like all species evolve. We recognize that what was once accepted or deemed appropriate is no longer appropriate. It is more instructive to move past denial, to talk truthfully about our history and learn from it, and to not repeat the same egregious, horrendous and seemingly unforgivable mistakes. Truth-telling has proven to be helpful in not oversimplifying the story and coming to erroneous or incomplete, finger-pointing convenient conclusions. When enough stories are told, an undeniable thread emerges. The storyline becomes more accurate, complete and cohesive. It informs us. It can guide us forward and change our course.

As Canadians, we need not only to tell the truth about our past, but it is imperative that we also examine our current record -- in which we are, by both our actions and lack of actions, complicit. We cannot know how future generations will view us, but we could start by examining our record on destroying arable land at an unprecedented rate, our abuse of the environment, and our continued support and perpetuation of an apartheid system.

South African poet, academic and journalist Antjie Krog describes the miracle rebirth of what she calls her, "wide and woeful land" in *Country of My Skull* (2000), the story of the South African truth and reconciliation experience. She speaks of the African term Ubuntu, which stands for the concept of shared humanity. "Ubuntu emphasizes the link between the individual and the collective. A person is human precisely in being enveloped in a community of other human beings, in being caught up in the bundle of human life. To be is to participate."

Truth and reconciliation are not about blaming and shaming. And yet, neither are they about amnesty. There can be no wiping the slate clean. Rather, truth and reconciliation are about hearing the truth, ending oppression, and the redemptive power of forgiveness. They are about repair and a new understanding of our human interconnectedness, about forging a just way forward together. Truth and reconciliation are about the consequences of actions that we are all party to.

The good news is that we have already begun the process of truth-telling and ending our denial about the past. As we begin to deal with our culpability and move forward towards reconciliation, perhaps we will finally begin to call ourselves one family and look after each other accordingly. This is how we move forward as a nation. We are all part of the process. It bears repeating: "To be is to participate."

Lindy Mechefske is a Kingston-based freelance writer. Her newest book, *Sir John's Table: The Culinary Life and Times of Canada's First Prime Minister*, was released in August.

Direct Link: <http://www.thewhig.com/2015/09/02/blaming-sir-john-a-impedes-reconciliation-process>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Montana woman taking her passion for Native American student success to the state level

By Shannon Newth - MTN News, Aug 28, 2015 9:29 AM MST Updated: Aug 28, 2015 9:29 AM MST



Jordann Lankford of Great Falls is taking on a new role by joining Superintendent of Public Instruction Denise Juneau's staff to represent the Native American voice in public schools. (MTN News photo)

GREAT FALLS -

As the new school year kicks off, Jordann Lankford of Great Falls is taking on a new role by joining Superintendent of Public Instruction Denise Juneau's staff to represent the Native American voice in public schools.

The decision to take a new job was a challenging one for Lankford, who just completed her first year at C.M. Russell High School as the Academic Achievement Coach for Native American students.

Lankford nearly didn't accept the position because she didn't want to leave her students.

"The bitter part is leaving the students I've formed such great relationships with this past year," she said.

She can now take her passion for her students and others across the state.

Lankford will advocate for Native American students as a member of the Office of Public Instruction.

She'll work alongside Juneau as the Graduation Matters Program assistant and travel to the roughly 50 Graduation Matters communities in the state.

"I need to make sure the Native voice is being represented at Graduation Matters," she said. "Make sure the Native students are being included as far as asking incentives, what can we do to help you."

According to OPI, Montana's graduation rate is at an all-time high, with 85.4 percent of students graduating each year.

Lankford said listening to students about what is working and isn't working in education is a good way to improve the learning experience.

"It doesn't make sense for us as adults to decide what's going to work for the kids. It makes way more sense to listen to the student, and the probability of it being successful is much higher," said Lankford. "We need to find a way to make education meaningful to every student."

Lankford will work with Graduation Matters for one year and then return to Great Falls next school year.

She starts her new position early next week.

Direct Link: <http://www.ktvq.com/story/29902245/montana-woman-taking-her-passion-for-native-american-student-success-to-the-state-level>

City, Native American Homelessness task force announce findings

By [Chelo Rivera](#) Published: August 28, 2015, 8:54 am Updated: August 28, 2015, 3:42 pm

ALBUQUERQUE (KRQE) – It's been one year since a group of teens beat two homeless Native Americans to death in Albuquerque. The incident prompted city officials to establish a task force to improve life for Native Americans here.

Friday morning Mayor Richard J. Berry announced their findings. The mayor's office says that brutal murder helped expose some of the challenges Native Americans face living in Albuquerque. Problems the city says can be fixed.

Mayor Berry says the task force has come up with 14 recommendations for the city to follow up on. They include more funding for the "first nation's community health source". Officials say \$300,000 will help provide more medical care, food and job services.

There will also be an increased focus on mental health issues, emergency housing and "cultural competency training" for all city employees who routinely work with the native population.

All this stems from then deadly beating a year ago on west Central where police say [**three teens killed two homeless Navajo men for the fun of it**](#) using rocks, poles and bricks.

Task force members say they have a lot of work to do.

Officials say with more outreach and education the hope is to spread cultural awareness and prevent further Native American homelessness.

The city says it is also considering building a separate shelter for homeless Native Americans.

Direct Link: <http://krqe.com/2015/08/28/city-native-american-homelessness-task-force-to-present-recommendations/>

Beyoncé on Keepin' It Creole: What Defines an Indigenous Group?

[Kyle T. Mays](#)

8/28/15

Recent controversies over claiming group identity (Native American and African American), who can claim it, and one's connection to a particular community reminded me of a 2012 L'Oreal commercial featuring Beyoncé. She has been on record stating that she is [Creole](#) (Louisiana). She even has a song titled, "Creole," in which she celebrates her Creole heritage (on her 2006 album B'Day). But on the commercial it stated that she was also "African American, Native American, and French." I began thinking, well, what is the relationship between being Creole and Native American?

I understand the advertising goal of a company trying to market to a particular audience, especially in an allegedly period where we can celebrate our multicultural heritages and simultaneously exist in a post-racial world (though just about any social indicators suggests otherwise). However, the link between being Creole and Native remains an interesting point. On the one hand, being Creole is celebrated as a unique identity, with African, French, or sometimes Spanish mixture. Creole people emerged with a unique mixture of cultural/ethnic heritages that influence everything from foods to language. Some even cite the generic term "Native American" as a part of this racial mixture.

The term Creole is a broad term, which has many (unstable) definitions, but is generally based upon geographic location and historical experience. If you scour the Internet, you can find numerous sites that celebrate being Creole, but they don't usually cite a specific Indigenous community or tribe. I reached out to Andrew Jolivet, Professor and Chair in American Indian Studies at San Francisco State University for comment. In an email he exchange he wrote, "there is a longstanding and interwoven cultural, ethnic, and land based and kinship connection between Native peoples of Louisiana and Creoles." However, the general public lacks an understanding of this relationship because of "coercive settler colonial forces" that "render those relationships as invisible through a systematic form of paper genocide through the [U.S.] Census."

Numerous scholars, including Brian Klopotek, Andrew Jolivet, Carolyn Dunn, and Rain Gomez, among others, have written extensively about the relationship between Creole and Indigenous identities. On an extensive Facebook post, Rain Gomez, an expert on Creole indigeneity wrote, "Louisiana holds within its territories intensely multilayered

histories” and “Louisiana’s history of racial mixing has given rise to specific Indigenous descended communities.” She notes that there are four federally recognized tribes and seven state recognized tribes. Gomez also notes that there are many Creole communities. She identifies as Cane River Creole and Opelousas Creole. The Cane River Creole are a well-documented group, according to Gomez. This group intermarried among other Creoles, traded, and consists of particular Indigenous groups including “Caddo, Choctaw, Wichita, Chitimacha, Tunica, Choctaw-Biloxi, Apache, and Quapaw.” Importantly, she identifies particular tribal communities. Thus, she avoids the erasure of Native peoples while highlighting the diversity that makes up a particular Creole community, and herself. Thus, being Creole and Indigenous are not separate, but can be embodied in unique, if not wonderful ways. Recognizing the links between Creoleness and indigeneity, according to Chickasaw theorist Jodi Byrd, is to recognize “the deep connection to indigenous resistances and cultural practices as well as indigenous kinship.”

The research and writing of some of the aforementioned scholars will continue to shed light on Creole indigeneity in Louisiana and beyond. I think Rain Gomez summarized well the importance of this work, and why it matters in our multicultural society:

“Understanding how Louisiana Creoles have been marginalized, fractionalized, and racialized means serious conversations about colorism, racism, and the lasting effects of Jim Crow segregation, exclusion from both White and Black communities, Indian Removal, and Indian Termination and Relocation, all of which had serious impacts on Louisiana Creole peoples and their perspectives within both home communities and (more importantly) outside communities.”

Although misperceptions about Creole indigeneity persist, Jolivette stated that relationships within the Creole community are “being strengthened” among the “Coushatta, Choctaw, and Atakapa-Ishak.” During a so-called post-racial era, Native identity policing, and when many Native people are fighting tribal disenrollment the story of Louisiana Creoles suggest that Native communities might do well to embrace their broad diversity and rid themselves of essentialized notions of Native identity that ignore the reality of how people actually live today.

Kyle T. Mays (Black/Saginaw Chippewa) earned his Ph.D. in the Department of History at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he is working to transform his dissertation titled, Indigenous Detroit: Indigeneity, Modernity, and Racial and Gender Formation in a Modern American City, 1871-2000, into a book. He can be followed on Twitter [@mays_kyle](https://twitter.com/mays_kyle).

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/08/28/beyonce-keepin-it-creole-what-defines-indigenous-group>

Rare Photo Slides Capture Native Americans in Late 1800s

[Dora Mekouar](#)

Posted August 28th, 2015



Hand-painted lantern slide by photographer Walter McClintock (1870-1949) of the Blackfoot Indians of Montana. (Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)

The son of a wealthy Pittsburgh carpetmaker, Walter McClintock became entranced by the American West after traveling there in 1895 to recover from a serious case of typhoid fever.

In 1896, he traveled West again as a photographer for a federal commission investigating national forests. While there, he came into contact with the Blackfoot community in northwestern Montana and began a life-long interest in them.

Over the next 20 years, the Yale graduate took several thousand photographs of the Blackfoot Indians — a name thought to have been acquired because of the black color of their moccasins, which were painted or darkened with ashes — and their culture.



Hand-painted lantern slide by photographer Walter McClintock (1870-1949) of the Blackfoot Indians of Montana. (Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)

McClintock believed Indian communities were undergoing rapid, dramatic change. Fearful that their traditional culture would be lost, he wanted a record their way of life before it completely disappeared.

He wrote books and gave lectures based upon his experiences interacting with the Blackfoot people.

One of McClintock's favorite images was of a Blackfoot lodge glowing from within, "emanating a warm, radiant incandescence", according to [author and historian Sherry L. Smith](#), who says the photographer "tried his best to enter that lodge and explain its interior life to other Americans".

During the early part of the 1800s, the Blackfoot numbered approximately 20,000 people.

However, ravaged by diseases brought by white settlers, starvation and war, their population was reduced to fewer than 5,000 by the turn of the century.

Today, there are about [16,000 registered Blackfoot Indians](#) living on the Blackfeet Reservation in northwestern Montana along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

Below are some hand-colored, transparent glass lantern slides McClintock took around the turn of the century. The originals are housed at [Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library](#).

A [lantern slide](#) is a positive print of a photograph on a glass slide that is often hand-painted to be more visually appealing.

In McClintock's case, the slides also represent an idealized version of a vanishing culture at the dawn of the modern age.



Buffalo teepee on left, Snake teepee on right, Star teepee in back center. Hand-painted lantern slide by photographer Walter McClintock (1870-1949). (Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)



Ceremony of the fasting woman. Hand-painted lantern slide by photographer Walter McClintock (1870-1949) of the Blackfoot Indians of Montana. (Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)



An original, unpainted image of two Blackfoot women inside a teepee in Montana, by photographer Walter McClintock. (Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)



This slide of Indians on horseback in South Piegan, accompanied the lecture entitled, "Dances of the Blackfoot", given in 1936. Hand-painted lantern slide by photographer Walter McClintock (1870-1949). (Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)



Blackfoot woman chopping firewood, Eagle teepee in foreground, Star teepee on left. Hand-painted lantern slide by photographer Walter McClintock (1870-1949). (Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)



White Grass entering his teepee at the end of the ceremony of the Dancing Pipe, from the lecture, "Dances of the Blackfoot" given in 1936. Hand-painted lantern slide by photographer Walter McClintock (1870-1949) of the Blackfoot Indians of Montana. (Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)

Direct Link: <http://blogs.voanews.com/all-about-america/2015/08/28/magical-photo-slides-show-native-americans-in-late-1800s/>

Native American nation holds on to dream of self-sustaining tribal village

By JUSTIN DENNIS jdennis@starbeacon.com | Posted: Sunday, August 30, 2015 12:30 am



Native American nation holds on to dream of self-sustaining tribal village

Jaeson Farrell, right, and Casey Cool, both of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., fish for minnows to bait a bigger catch Friday at Fischer's Pine Lake in Jefferson, during the 7th Annual Native American Powwow. Today is the event's final day.

JEFFERSON — Bob "Quiet Wolf" Thompson is a soft-spoken man. The head of the Ashtabula-area United Eastern Lenape Nation said the first half of his given Native American name, Chitkwesi Teme, is more literally "be quiet," as his mother would often tell him.

Quiet Wolf spoke at length about his people's culture and its true place in the world, of which the Lenape have dreamed for decades. The Lenape — of whom between 100 to 150 live in Ashtabula County — are known as "the grandfathers" or "the teachers," tasked with passing on the tribe's way of life to others.

That's why the nation's annual powwow — which drew several Cherokee, Apache, Shawnee, Seneca and others from all over the country and parts of Canada to Fischer's Pine Lake in Jefferson this weekend — is so important to the culture's oral tradition. A traditional Native American powwow is a time to share experiences, knowledge and camaraderie.

“I grew up with my grandmother teaching me the Native American ‘three sisters’ gardening,” Quiet Wolf said.

That’s the three Native American staple crops: corn, beans and squash, each grown near the other in the same garden. The crops are planted in sequence. Once the corn begins to sprout, the beans are planted and will grow twining around the cornstalk — no need for a beanpole. Planting winter squash next will naturally keep weeds away. The process doesn’t require pesticide or genetic modification — it’s pure.

That spirit of purity is behind the Lenape’s longstanding vision to create a self-sufficient settlement — the “River of Many Fish Village” — on which anyone can learn to live off the land. The traditional Native American longhouse village would subsist on bow-hunting, hand-fishing and gardening — no electricity or modern comforts.

“We want the village to show how it can be done without all the conveniences,” Quiet Wolf said. “We’d come back to where we don’t have the television, we don’t have the communication of modern technology. We have the idea of when we sit down, we talk face-to-face.

“We bring the family back together.”

River of Many Fish Village was the dream of former nation chief Sam Gray Wolf, whom Quiet Wolf said brought many Lenape back to northeastern Ohio, and former Chief Billy Blue Feather after him, who passed away last year.

The nation has sought a 30- to 100-acre spot near a fishable river in Ashtabula County to settle, but finances and a sullied local environment have kept it from becoming a reality for decades.

Through the annual powwow, the nation slowly brings in funds to be set aside for the endeavor. The event’s handmade goods auction tends to bring in around \$1,000 each year, Quiet Wolf said. That money is set aside for the nation’s land fund, he said, but over the years, some of that money is needed elsewhere in the nation.

“At \$1,000 or \$2,000 (an acre), how much property can we buy?” he said. A 501(c)3 nonprofit, the Lenape Native Path, was also established to receive property donations. Although he said the economy is not what is used to be, the recent decline in property values is a good portent.

“If we have our land, if we have our deer — we can have our housing, we can set up the gardens as we used to have them,” he said. “We always tell the story that if we have our own land, you could raise a family and heat a home of at least 2,000 square feet on four acres of land just by the downed trees.

“You don’t have to be out there cutting down new ones. Take what’s there. Take what the creator gives you.

“The preservation of land is a history lesson — to be able to teach everybody what they can eat, what they can use for medicine ... most of the medicine is here. It’s been here for years before Western culture and (pharmaceuticals.)

“If we got poison ivy, there’s a cure within two feet of it,” he said — that cure is jewelweed, also called “touch-me-not,” which tends to grow near poison ivy. The clear, watery sap inside the stem neutralizes poison ivy’s Urushiol oil, which causes the itchy rash.

Quiet Wolf said he received several Ashtabula-area parcels as payment for contracting work he did. They were donated to the nation, likely for future sale — the plots are in the post-industrial Fields Brook area, a designated EPA cleanup site. He said finding clean, healthy, livable land has also been a setback.

“In the gulf of Ashtabula, there’s so much food down there, but it’s been desecrated to a point where ... it’s not edible,” Quiet Wolf said.

Quiet Wolf said he looks forward to the day the River of Many Fish Village is realized — not just for the Lenape nation or its people.

“Because we are all one people — whether you’re Dakota, Lakota, Cherokee, Navajo, Pueblo, whatever. It’s also if you’re English, Finnish, Italian, Hungarian — it doesn’t matter,” he said. “I want to see everybody come to the realization that you can live in peace. You can live on a piece of land. You don’t have to desecrate the land.

“Why hurt something that’s treated us so well for so many years?”

Direct Link: http://www.starbeacon.com/news/local_news/native-american-nation-holds-on-to-dream-of-self-sustaining/article_64978c63-2bf6-5a67-8c92-e8b1841e1c5a.html?mode=print

Archaeologists study largest Native American massacre site in history

By Melanie Fenstermaker for The Herald Journal

Aug 29, 2015

When Col. Patrick Connor led a group of U.S. cavalymen in a daytime attack on the Shoshone in Idaho, at least 250 men, women and children were killed. The events of that bitter cold January morning in 1863 are referred to as the Bear River Massacre, and although it was the largest Native American massacre in U.S. history, few people know the story.

For years, the exact location of the massacre was lost — but now, more than 150 years later, archaeologists are searching for the site, hoping to better document the event and educate the public about its significance.

“This was the largest single killing of Native Americans, but kids out here don’t know about it,” said Ken Cannon, the president of USU Archaeological Services. “Hopes are there will be better knowledge and interpretation to let people know that this very important event happened here.”

USU Archaeological Services was hired last year by the Idaho State Historical Society to do the first-ever survey of the area, which is located just north of Preston. The American Battlefield Protection Program gave a grant to Ken Reid, director of the State Historic Preservation Office in Idaho, to fund the project as part of Idaho Territory’s 150th anniversary in 2013.

The archaeologists are using a series of geophysical and excavation techniques to find the site, where they hope plaques will be erected to commemorate the historic battlefield.

Challenges and Promising Data

Fifteen decades have changed southeastern Idaho: farming, irrigation and natural processes have altered the land, even diverting the course of the Bear River and one of its tributaries, Battle Creek. Part of the archaeologists’ goal is to locate where the Bear River and Battle Creek originally flowed, then use the information to find key massacre sites, such as the Shoshone village, initial assault and fleeing of tribe members.

“One of the first things we’ve been trying to do is bring together all these various historical maps and documents to try to understand the landscape we see today,” Ken Cannon said.

In addition to historical document interpretation, the team used geophysical instruments to survey the land in search of possible historic items. Although most of what has been found so far is “farm trash,” some recent geophysical data has been promising, said Molly Cannon, who works at USU Archaeological Services.

A magnetic gradiometer, a tool that measures magnetic differences beneath the surface, revealed a heavy, black, square signature in the area.

“The size and shape of it is pretty suggestive of what a house floor might look like,” Molly Cannon said.

The archaeologists suspect the mark may indicate the location of the old Shoshone village. The village likely has the “biggest archaeological signature” of the Bear River Massacre sites, Molly Cannon said, which makes it a natural place to start the excavation.

“The area we are most interested in is trying to find out where the village was,” Ken Cannon said. “If we can identify where the village was, we can work back from that.”

Although the image suggests a house floor might be buried beneath the surface, the archaeologists can’t be certain until they excavate, she said.

“With geophysics all we’ve got are images. It just looks like shades of white and gray,” Molly Cannon said. “We can see patterns, but we won’t know what they are until we excavate them.”

Ground-penetrating radar and metal detection results also revealed the area as a point of interest, she said.

The dark print is the most “interesting” of the geophysical results, Molly Cannon said, and USU Archaeological Services plans to take a small group to the site to excavate in October.

Results of the excavation, Reid said, will be made public in November or December.

The excavation, however, will be modest, and supervised carefully by the Shoshone people.

A Watchful Shoshone Eye

Patty Timbimboo-Madsen, the cultural and natural resource manager of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, knows the story of the Bear River Massacre from her tribe’s oral tradition, and doesn’t like the idea of archaeologists telling her the history of her people.

“To me, the work of archaeologists is still a one-sided story,” she said. “They’re telling us who and what we are, and that kind of gets a little hurtful.”

Many commemorations of the massacre by non-Shoshone people have been insensitive to Shoshone losses. For years the incident was known as the Battle of Bear River, and it wasn’t identified as a massacre until a 1993 review by the National Park Service.

“They realized it shouldn’t have happened the way it did ... the killing of children, elders, women,” Timbimboo-Madsen said.

Although incident’s name has changed, evidence of the mislabeling still exists. A monument erected in 1953 says the incident was caused by “an attack by the Indians upon peaceful inhabitants” and that the Shoshone were “guilty of hostile attacks on emigrants and settlers.”

“There is a monument erected by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers who, bless their hearts, did the best they could in the time that they put it up,” said Darren Parry, the vice

chairman of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation. “It wasn’t the Battle of Bear River and it’s slanted toward the savage Indians and the brave soldiers that fought, so it doesn’t tell the whole story.”

The Shoshone are purchasing land in the area. If the location of the massacre is found, Parry hopes they can erect a monument that tells a more accurate version of the story.

Col. Patrick Connor was called upon when settlers felt they needed protection, Timbimboo-Madsen said, so he brought a group of volunteers from California to help.

“He told them, ‘I will come and protect the overland mail routes, I’ll keep my eye on the Mormons and I’ll deal with the Indians,’” she said.

During the time of the attack, the Shoshone were gathered for a ceremony to welcome in a new year and hope for an abundance of food sources, Timbimboo-Madsen said, and that’s when Connor’s army attacked with gunfire.

The Shoshone were armed and returned fire, but they seem to have run out of ammunition, Ken Cannon added. What began as a battle turned into a massacre.

“One of the tribal members foresaw the killing of our people and he kept telling the people we better go, we better go, they’re going to kill us,” Timbimboo-Madsen said. “A few other people survived, but that was it.”

The massacre was rarely talked about because it was overshadowed by events from the Civil War. Others chose not to discuss the massacre or its location because it was so devastating, she said.

“It was a place where no one really wanted to talk about because of what had happened there,” Timbimboo-Madsen said. “It was a sad, sad day, not only for the Indian people, but I think some people in the community who made friends with the Shoshone people were horrified by what had happened.”

Although sharing the story sometimes makes Timbimboo-Madsen feel sad, she believes it is important to educate others about the massacre.

“As a tribal member, you know, I go through periods of being really saddened by it,” she said, “but it’s my job as a descendant to tell their story.”

Despite any hesitance from tribe members, the tribal council voted unanimously to allow the archaeologists to excavate, provided at least one member of the tribe supervises at all times.

Out of respect for the deceased, no uncovered remains from the excavation will be shown to the public.

“A lot of people in the community have expressed a desire that any human remains found not be displayed, and we’re certainly sympathetic to that,” Reid said. “We’ve got laws to protect the graves on the state and federal level. We certainly do not want to excavate any bodies.”

The archaeologists are working to cooperate with and respect the Shoshone people in order to uncover the history of the Bear River Massacre.

“I respect what they do and what they’re trying to do, which is trying to tell a story about what happened,” Parry said. “We can all learn from it, and the more we know about it, the more we understand it.”

Direct Link: http://news.hjnews.com/allaccess/archaeologists-study-largest-native-american-massacre-site-in-history/article_5b7ba8e9-923b-5cc2-a664-2a536c43a9ce.html

Rare silent Native American movie of 1920s attracting a lot of interest





Comanche tribal members Esther LaBarre and White Parker were the lead actors in “The Daughter of Dawn.” Other actors in the movie were children of Comanche Chief Quanah Parker: White and Wandada Parker. Courtesy of Oklahoma Historical Society

By Beccy Tanner

The Wichita Eagle

A nearly 100-year-old movie, which showcases 300 Kiowa and Comanche people from Kansas and Oklahoma, is now showing on Netflix.

The rare silent movie, “The Daughter of Dawn,” was made in 1920. Only one copy of the movie, which was filmed on highly flammable and easily decomposable silver nitrate film, was made. It was shown to the public only once, at a 1920 viewing in Los Angeles.

The lone surviving copy of the movie was found in a North Carolina garage nearly 15 years ago where it had been stored for decades. The Oklahoma Historical Society purchased the copy in 2007 for \$5,000.

Grants were received to restore it. Amazingly, the entire movie – all 83 minutes – survived. The film was digitized, with closed captions added.

The movie started streaming earlier this month on the online-subscription service for movies and television shows – in part, because of high demand. Within the past few years, the Oklahoma Historical Society has offered small viewings of the restored movie around the region. Word of mouth and social media quickly helped spread interest of the movie.

“We have been fortunate to share this with tribes in Oklahoma and the feedback from the tribal members is that it is such a rare opportunity to see family members and elders they have heard about in this movie,” said Jeff Moore, director of the Oklahoma Museum of Popular Culture.

“It would be like going and seeing a movie your grandparents were all in.”

What makes “Daughter of Dawn” so valuable and a historic wonder are the actors, all of whom are the sons and daughters of the Kiowa and Comanche tribes who once roamed the plains of Kansas. They brought their own clothing, horses, tepees and everyday objects to be filmed on location in the summer of 1920 in the Wichita Mountains of Oklahoma, near Anadarko.

Key actors were White and Wandada Parker, the children of Comanche Chief Quanah Parker.

The demand to see the movie has been so strong, Moore said, the Oklahoma Historical Society is planning on releasing DVDs of the movie for sale by the end of the year.

During the late 19th century and turn of the 20th century, native languages and customs were strongly discouraged by the federal government through military force and at government boarding schools. The Kiowa and Comanche were pushed from Kansas into Indian Territory, now Oklahoma.

“When you look at this movie and you realize that tribes around this country at this time period were not allowed to wear traditional clothing or participate in any traditional ceremonies – and then you look at this film and see how it was made, you realize it was a little bit subversive, if you understand history,” Moore said.

“The director and producer didn’t have to rely on Hollywood props; these people used their own things. They weren’t made up costumes.”

Read more here: <http://www.kansas.com/news/local/article32805255.html#storylink=cpy>

‘Real’ Indians, the Vanishing Native Myth, and the Blood Quantum Question

[Dina Gilio-Whitaker](#)

8/30/15

The following is an excerpt from a book project by Dina Gilio-Whitaker. The tentative title is There Are No Real Indians Anymore and 20 Other Myths About Native Americans. The book is co-authored with Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz; Beacon Press, scheduled for fall 2016.

Of all myths associated with American Indians no myth is as pervasive as the myth of the vanishing Indian. We are all familiar with many of the other myths that were invented over the last 500 years and thanks to the work of Native activists, writers, intellectuals, and their allies we have begun to dismantle some of them in meaningful ways.

Take for example the myth of Columbus as the discoverer of America. Campaigns over the last couple of decades in the United States have led to changes at the level of local

and state governments to repudiate the veneration of Columbus as a hero and instead recognize indigenous peoples on October 12. Despite the fact that it is still a national holiday it seems entirely possible that the day will come when it will be no longer.

In another example, with each passing year we see more and more media coverage on the mythic nature of the conventional Thanksgiving narrative. Not all Americans may understand the nuances of what makes this story largely a myth, but with each passing year there seems to be a growing sense in the general public that there is little truth to the story they grew up with.

The vanishing Indian myth, on the other hand, is far more intractable because it has so many different manifestations. The reason for this is because of the inherent nature of the settler state, which is to eliminate the Native. This it does in a huge variety of ways, and because it is woven throughout the social fabric of the settler state it is well concealed.

Even before the United States was created European immigrants counted on the disappearance of the indigenous population because they wanted the land, and so they narrated the reality they wanted to see as soon as they got here. It's recognizable through every era of post-contact North America and has been written into every aspect of American history. First Indians were disappearing due to mass epidemics. Then they were disappearing through slavery. They were disappearing by being pushed out of their territories. They were disappearing through massacres and other acts of violence.

By the end of the nineteenth century when the vanishing Native myth reached its crescendo and most Indians had been contained on reservations, disappearance took the form of culturecide by assimilation. Thanks to the boarding school system which killed the Indian but saved the man, Indians throughout the twentieth century were disappearing through trauma and identity murder. Trauma—from shame induced by the boarding schools, for example—caused many Native people to deny their heritage in order to survive racism, contributing to what I call identity murder.

Identity murder is one of the most common (and insidious) modes of Native disappearance today. It takes many forms within American culture, and is always based on definitions of the “real” Indian. Real Indians dress like Indians. Real Indians live on reservations. Real Indians have reservations. Real Indians are full blood. Real Indians are at least half blood. Real Indians are enrolled. Real Indians know their language. Real Indians practice their ceremonies. Real Indians have dark skin and long black hair.

The list goes on, and it isn't based on any sense of logic.

These impossible criteria are markers of authenticity and those who fail to meet them are deemed inauthentic, either in the minds of individuals or in governmental institutions. They are effectively eliminated as Natives.

Blood quantum is perhaps the biggest determinant of Indian authenticity, but even those who are full blood can be deemed not real based on some stereotypes or legal definitions

of what real Indians are. All Indians are subject to being judged for their authenticity, and even despite high blood quantum or enrolled status they can be deemed inauthentic simply by virtue of the fact that they live in the modern world.

Because after all, the real Indians were the ones who dressed in buckskins and hunted buffalo and deer for their living, and didn't speak English. And they've been gone a long time.

Non-natives, whether they know it or not, are conditioned to determine the authenticity of Native people whenever they encounter them, especially those that live in places where Indians are highly invisible, like large cities or in states with low Native populations. Because they have been indoctrinated with the idea of the vanishing Native their whole lives, the assumption that there is no such thing as real Natives anymore is like a software program constantly running in the background. So when they meet someone who claims to be Native, the unconscious impulse is to automatically determine the truth of the claim.

They do this by asking how much Indian blood you have. And depending on your physical characteristics, they'll either say that "you look it," or that "gee, I don't see it." Your authenticity as a Native person is thus based on your appearance, not on who you actually are.

For you non-Native readers, keep this in mind. Native people rarely ask each other about their blood degree because they know that being Native is not about an abstract mathematical equation that parses out their identity into measurable fractions. When you demand to know how much "Indian blood" someone has, whether you realize it or not you are presuming the untruth of their identity claims, which is why the question can be so offensive. But most Native people don't mind talking about who they are, so instead ask what Native nation they are from. That opens the door for a broader dialogue without subtly accusing them of a fake identity.

Dina Gilio-Whitaker (Colville) is a freelance writer and Research Associate at the Center for World Indigenous Studies. She was educated at the University of New Mexico and holds a bachelor's degree in Native American Studies and a master's degree in American Studies. Follow her blog at DinaGWhitaker.wordpress.com.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/08/30/real-indians-vanishing-native-myth-and-blood-quantum-question>

Center for Native American Youth Releases GEN-I Map to Connect Native Youth

[Vincent Schilling](#)

8/31/15

Last week, the Washington D.C. based Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) announced their release of a comprehensive map of resources as part of the Obama administrations Generation Indigenous or GEN-I initiative.

CNAY's map, [which is available online](#), includes a list of nationwide programs, services and Native Youth contacts in support of the Obama Administration's GEN-I initiative to improve the lives of Native Youth in Indian Country.

Last year at the White House's Sixth Annual 2014 White House Tribal Nations Conference in Washington, President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Dept. of the Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, Attorney General Eric Holder and other Senior Administration officials addressed a number of relevant issues to Indian country to assist Native Youth. The predominant topic of discussion to assist the youth was the GEN-I initiative.

According to President Obama and others in his administration, the Generation Indigenous or "GEN-I" initiative is an initiative that "takes a comprehensive, culturally appropriate approach to ensure all young Native people can reach their full potential."

According to CNAY's release last Thursday: "As a part of President Obama's Generation Indigenous (GEN-I) initiative, the [Center for Native American Youth \(CNAY\)](#) at the Aspen Institute has developed a map of impactful programs and Native American youth leaders creating positive change across Indian Country. This 'GEN-I Network map' includes local organizations, youth councils, youth-led volunteer projects and connects youth with each other to expand access to resources and services – two key goals of Gen-I and CNAY's National Native Youth Network."

Erin Bailey the Executive Director of CNAY also expressed in the release, "Every day youth leaders and stakeholders from Indian Country reach out seeking to connect with their peers on the community-level," said Bailey, "This map is a tool to make our resources and connections available to all."

Bailey also told ICTMN, that the map would be a great way for Native youth from nearly any community to connect with other youth leaders seeking to reach out to connect and change their own lives for the better and/or change the lives of others.

"This map is a great way for a young person to go out and connect with other youth leaders. It is an incredible body of information that we have worked to compile," she said.

The map, released as of last week, will be updated consistently and CNAY is also asking others in Indian Country to inform them of other impactful youth programs:

Through the Network map, stakeholders – including funders and policymakers – can easily see programs making a difference in Indian Country as defined by the young leaders who are creating positive community change. Through our outreach to more than 5,000 Native youth over nearly five years, CNAY has learned about and met with hundreds of programs across Indian Country that Native youth believe are making a difference. The map provides a platform to share this critical information with stakeholders and youth leaders.

The Network map will be updated regularly with CNAY engaging and working with youth to submit these programs in order to build out and grow the map. To learn more about our mapping efforts, to view the Network map, or to tell us about impactful youth programs in your community, please visit: http://cnay.org/Network_Map.html .

According to Celeste Terry, (Oglala Lakota) a GEN-I Youth Ambassador and Founder of Thinking Indigenous, “This is going to help improve youth networking. I am positive this will prove to be a great source for collaborating and planning activities and events with other youth leaders in different regions.”

The Center for Native American Youth is dedicated to improving the health, safety and overall well-being of Native American youth through communication, policy development and advocacy. Founded by former US Senator Byron Dorgan in February 2011, CNAY is a policy program within the Aspen Institute, headquartered in Washington, DC. CNAY works to strengthen and create new connections as well as exchange resources and best practices that address the challenges facing Native youth, with a special emphasis on suicide prevention. Visit CNAY’s website for a comprehensive list of resources available to young Native Americans, tribes and the general public. For more information, visit www.cnay.org

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/08/31/center-native-american-youth-releases-gen-i-map-connect-native-youth-161578>

Boarding schools: A black hole of Native American history



Zigmund Hollow Horn (NCR photo/Vinnie Rotondaro)

[Vinnie Rotondaro](#) | Sep. 1, 2015
[The Trail of History](#)
[Eagle Butte, S.D.](#)

Zigmund Hollow Horn sat inside the deanery of a small Episcopal church just off Eagle Butte's main street. A thick fog had settled over town. The engine of his pickup, parked outside, pinged and crackled.

Sitting on a couch, his eyes trained outward and down, he began to talk about his life.

"I'm a 65-year-old male, Native American, recovering alcoholic of 25 years," he said. "I've been in pain ever since I can remember," emotional pain, physical pain. "Day in and day out, I go to bed with it," he said.

"Anyways, that's all due to my upbringing."

Like many in Cheyenne River, and throughout Indian Country, Hollow Horn attended an American Indian boarding school. Boarding schools were government and church-run educational facilities that openly sought to Westernize and Christianize Native American children — an experience that facilitated a direct continuation of the logic brought by the Doctrine of Discovery.

Hollow Horn's mother died in childbirth. He spent the first five years of his life in quarantine with tuberculosis. Following his release from quarantine, his father sent him to "a Catholic Indian mission school, St. Joe's Indian mission" in Chamberlain, S.D.

"When they take you down to Chamberlain, or any kind of Indian mission school," he said, "they take you down on Aug. 16 and you don't come back till May 21. You're just there. I did that for eight years."

Hollow Horn and his classmates were given uniforms and chores. They "went to church three times a day, constantly, day in, day out."

Standing in the pews, away from their family, their culture banished and condemned, some children would faint. "And when they faint, there's no mercy," Hollow Horn said. "They just drag you out, take you to the back of the pews somewhere, and they slap you up, wake you up, give you water or whatever. ... Then they take you back again, put you in your pew."

Classmates were regularly hit or whipped with a belt. "The older classmates would hold you down," he said. "They had to hold you down. That's an order."

Marcella Le Beau also witnessed abuse in a government-run boarding school. "I saw the whipping lines," she said, "when they would punish the boys. They would make them take off their leather belts ... and whip them as they ran through."

Like Hollow Horn, she said that children internalized their anxiety and trauma.

"We never talked about it," she said, even at night, sleeping bed to bed, "we never talked, and that's strange now that I think back on it. We couldn't be children. We couldn't talk and play. And we never talked about it afterwards either. It was just strange."

Despite the trauma she suffered at boarding school, Le Beau later moved off the reservation, going to Pontiac, Mich., and California. She served as an Army nurse during D-Day, and eventually moved back to Cheyenne River, where she advocates for her people.

Hollow Horn wasn't so fortunate. He said his boarding school experience broke him. Moving into adulthood, he fell into alcoholism and out of touch with his own children, spending the last quarter century in psychological, emotional and spiritual recovery.

Others were even less fortunate.

"A lot of these guys on this reservation, they kept quiet through their years, and when they got older, they went to alcoholism, and they died that way," Hollow Horn said.

"They got us when we were young," he said. "I used to speak my native tongue when I went down there, and I can't even talk now. They beat it out of me."

"If you spoke your language, they held you down, put a bar of soap in your mouth."

A fundamental violence

Many contend that the boarding schools represented a focused effort — a collusion between church and state — to stamp out Native American identity, affecting generations of children.

Tsianina Lomawaima, a leading authority on Native American education, agreed with that characterization to a point, but cautioned against generalizing.

"People want to know the story, and there is no one story," she said.

"Thousands of people went through this experience," she said, "all different tribal backgrounds, all different ages, all different personalities, and so there were many, many, many different boarding school experiences," from good, to very bad.

The schools emerged in the late 1800s, part of a U.S. government-led effort to "civilize Indians," she said. "And that, of course, meant Christianizing — those two things were not seen as separate at all."

According to Lomawaima, a professor of American Indian studies at the University of Arizona and also a Creek Indian, "about 25 off-reservation boarding schools operated in America" at their height. Plenty of on-reservation boarding and day schools also existed.

Whether Catholic or the more numerous "federal" (run by the government and promoting Protestant Christianity), the schools functioned in essentially the same manner. However, student reaction "varied dramatically between someone who went into the school as an English speaker from a family that had been Christian for three or four generations, and really wanted an education," said Lomawaima, "and someone like my dad, who went in under duress, [on] order of the courts, separated from his family at the age of 8 or 9, didn't see his mom again until he was a teenager."

"He was one of those that had a very negative experience and feelings about it, but still as an adult could say about some aspects of the school, like the trades training he got, 'There are things I learned there I would have never learned otherwise.' "

Nevertheless, the schools exercised a fundamental kind of "violence," Lomawaima said, "taking kids away from their families, educating them in a system of knowledge, language, economy, law, diet, clothing, everything, different from who they are. ... And the physical violence on top of all that."

Some children were forcibly brought to the schools by the police while others were sent "voluntarily" by parents. "But you have to think carefully about the word voluntary," Lomawaima said. "If this is the only school that will accept you, if it's the only chance for you or your child's education, is that voluntary?"

During the Great Depression, "people couldn't feed their kids," she said. U.S. public schools were often closed to Native Americans, and "some parents really wanted their kids to have an education."

Catholic boarding schools were numerous in the Northern Plains, Lomawaima said. They were also present nationally. But outside of Canada, very little is known about them.

"I regret to say that I don't know of anybody who's looked at Catholic schools in the U.S.," she said. "Welcome to the black holes of Native American history."

[Vinne Rotondaro is *NCR* national correspondent. His email address is vrotondaro@ncronline.org.]

Editor's note: *It may seem like papal statements from 500 years ago are ancient history. But Native American activists and scholars insist that Catholicism's past continues to affect the present. Papal bulls from the 1400s condoned the conquest of the Americas and other lands inhabited by indigenous people. The papal documents led to an international norm called the Doctrine of Discovery, which dehumanized non-Christians and legitimized their suppression by nations around the world, including by the United States. Now Native Americans say the church helped commit genocide and refuses to come to terms with it. This is Part Two of a six-part series on the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery.*

Direct Link: <http://ncronline.org/news/peace-justice/boarding-schools-black-hole-native-american-history>

Nebraska Nursing Home for Native Americans to Open Next Year

LINCOLN, Neb. — Sep 2, 2015, 6:04 PM ET
By GRANT SCHULTE Associated Press

A long-awaited [Nebraska](#) nursing home on the border with South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation will begin accepting Native American residents early next year to ease a severe care shortage in one of the nation's poorest regions, a project official said Wednesday.

The facility is under construction on a 600-acre patch of tribal land in Whiteclay, a tiny Nebraska village on the [South Dakota](#) border that is known for selling millions of cans of beer each year to residents of the neighboring dry reservation.

The nursing home will open for any member of a federally-recognized Indian tribe, but most will likely come from the Oglala Sioux Tribe, said Ron Ross, the president of the Lincoln-based Native American Health Management LLC, which will manage the facility.

"The need is severe," said Ross, a former Nebraska state treasurer. "I think it will give people a reason to think differently about Whiteclay. It's going to take care of elders and provide good jobs for people."

Whiteclay has fewer than a dozen residents, but its four alcohol stores sold the equivalent of 3.9 million cans of beer and malt liquor last year, according to the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission.

Critics say the town fuels the alcoholism on a reservation with widespread poverty, unemployment and one of the nation's highest alcohol-related mortality rates. Tribe members voted in 2013 to legalize alcohol and use the profits for education and treatment programs, but the Oglala Sioux tribal council hasn't taken the formal steps required to allow sales and possession. The main Pine Ridge village sits in Oglala Lakota County, formerly Shannon County, which had the nation's third-highest poverty rate in 2010, according U.S. census data.

The 51,000-square-foot facility will have 60 beds once complete, with room to expand to 80. Ross said he expects the first residents at the home in February or March.

The home will create between 80 and 100 jobs. Project officials have already received employment applications from residents in Gordon and Rushville, Nebraska, Ross said, and they hope to make use of the nursing program at Oglala Lakota College on the reservation.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe is paying the construction costs with a \$13.5 million loan from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community of Minnesota, which owns and operates that state's largest casino, and \$3 million of its own money. The federal government will repay the loan and reimburse the home's operating expenses through Medicaid and private payers.

Even though most nursing homes are funded with a combination of state and federal Medicaid dollars, Ross said Nebraska will not shoulder any of the cost. The Whiteclay facility will rely partially on federal Medicaid dollars, and the federal Indian Health Service will cover the state's usual share.

The project is located in Nebraska because of a moratorium on new South Dakota nursing home beds imposed in 1988. The reservation is subject to the moratorium despite the tribe's status as a sovereign nation, according to the South Dakota Department of Health.

South Dakota has 110 nursing homes and 175 assisted living facilities throughout the state, but many are concentrated around Sioux Falls and Rapid City, the state's two largest cities.

"There's an ample number of beds overall in the state, but there are some areas that don't have enough," said Tom Martinec, deputy secretary of the South Dakota Department of Health. "It's one of the drawbacks of the moratorium. In some cases, they're not located in the right places."

Martinec said the moratorium was imposed to promote the development of other long-term care options that are less expensive, but can still serve patients who don't need around-the-clock nursing care.

South Dakota passed a law in 2010 that granted Pine Ridge an exemption to the moratorium, but the exemption was set to end in June 2012 and tribal officials didn't act on it right away. A 2012 law later removed the time limit for South Dakota Indian reservations, but project planners had already broken ground for the Nebraska facility in 2011.

The lack of nursing homes forces some elderly tribe members to move to facilities that are far from their families, culture and native Lakota language, said Leonard Little Finger, 76, who serves on the nursing home's board. Little Finger said an estimated 400 elderly residents who once lived on the reservation have left for nursing home care elsewhere.

"They're beyond the reach of their families, who can go up for maybe an occasional visit," said Little Finger, who lives in the reservation village of Oglala, South Dakota. "Families can't go 200 to 300 miles every weekend just to visit grandma. The nursing home at Whiteclay is a dream that came true."

Little Finger said the closest nursing home is in Martin, South Dakota, about 45 miles east of the main Pine Ridge village. Another is located in Kadoka, more than 100 miles from the main village. The reservation is about as large as Delaware and [Rhode Island](#) combined.

The parcel of Nebraska land owned by the tribe was part of a 10-mile-wide, 5-mile deep buffer zone that was created in 1889 to protect the reservation from whiskey peddlers. President Theodore Roosevelt returned all but one square mile of that land to the public domain in 1904, and white settlers flocked to the area.

Direct Link: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/nebraska-nursing-home-native-americans-open-year-33491265?singlePage=true>

Denali, Ongtupqa, and Other Native American Names for Landmarks

Mount McKinley was recently renamed Denali, but it's not the only one with a Native American name



By Danny Lewis
smithsonian.com
September 1, 2015

Since 1917, the tallest mountain in North America has been known as “Mount McKinley” on official maps and registers. But on August 28, the Department of the Interior declared that the 20,237-foot peak would [once again be officially known as “Denali.”](#) the name it held for thousands of years.

“This name change recognizes the sacred status of Denali to many Alaska Natives,” [Secretary Jewell said in a statement.](#) “The name Denali has been official for use by the State of Alaska since 1975, but even more importantly, the mountain has been known as Denali for generations.”

Meaning “the great one” or “the high one,” Denali plays a central role in the creation myth of the Koyukon Athabascans, a Native Alaskan group that has lived in the region for centuries, [Julie Hirschfeld Davis writes for *The New York Times*.](#) The mountain first became known as Mount McKinley in 1896, when a gold prospector emerged from the wilderness to learn that William McKinley, a defender of the gold standard, had just been nominated as a presidential candidate. While McKinley was assassinated just six months into his first term and never set foot in Alaska, the name stuck.

Denali is one of the most high-profile cases of official mapmakers disregarding the names given to natural landmarks by Native Americans but it is far from the only one. Here are a few of the United States’ natural wonders that had names for centuries before Europeans set foot in the Americas:

The Grand Canyon

[The second-most visited national park](#) in the country and one of the United States’ most iconic natural landmarks, the Grand Canyon has been continuously inhabited by Native

American groups for almost 12,000 years, [according to the National Parks Service](#). The canyon was called "[Ongtupqa](#)" in the Hopi language and was considered a holy site and a passageway to the afterlife.

Mount Rushmore

The cliffside that bears the likenesses of George Washington, Theodore Roosevelt, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln changed several times during the 19th century. The Black Hills of South Dakota, where the presidential carvings loom, was originally Sioux holy land, with the mountain itself known as "The Six Grandfathers," [Nick Kirkpatrick writes for *The Washington Post*](#). While the land was promised to the Sioux by an 1868 treaty, it was taken back by the federal government in 1877. The mountain was officially named "Mount Rushmore" in 1930 after [a New York lawyer who liked to hunt in the area](#).

The Everglades

Once covering over 11,000 square miles of Florida's marshland, the Everglades were home for several Native American groups, including the Calusa, Seminole and Miccosukee tribes for more than 3,000 years. [Originally called Pa-hay-Okee](#), meaning "grassy river" in the Seminole language, the marshes were dubbed "the Everglades" by the first Englishmen to visit the region, [according to the National Parks Service](#).

Mount Washington

The tallest mountain in the northeast, New Hampshire's Mount Washington was once called [Agiocochook](#), or "Home of the Great Spirit," by the local Abenaki people. The mountain was first referred to as Mount Washington in 1784 in honor of the then-general's military service, but was officially named by the group of mountaineers who designated New Hampshire's Presidential Range in 1820, according to the [Appalachian Mountain Club](#).

Read more: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/president-obama-officially-renames-north-americas-tallest-mountain-denali-180956458/#HGYKZdMIORg6gAq1.99>

Native American sweats out trauma of the past

By News Producer • 16 hours ago



Tom Levy

This story originally aired on September 9th, 2014.

Native American Culture has been under siege since Europeans first arrived on these shores centuries ago.

But as we've been hearing, many Natives have reclaimed and renewed the traditions of their ancestors, despite the push toward assimilation, or annihilation. This story is about the sweat lodge, a once-integral part of life for the people on this land. KALW's Judy Silber brings us to a small East Oakland backyard where the practice has not been lost.

It's intense in a sweat lodge. You enter a round structure, about five feet high at the center, and sit down on the earthen floor. Then the flap of heavy blankets closes and you're left in utter darkness. Moments later, the leader pours water over hot, volcanic rocks. Like a sauna, thick steam rises and spreads.

For some people, the experience can be terrifying, at least at first. For others, it's a welcome home.

That's how it was for Samuel Martinez. His first sweat lodge ceremony was like a déjà vu, he says, a coming home. The ceremonies helped him to reclaim a lost heritage and spirituality.

He now offers the same chance to others through a lodge in his Oakland backyard.

"It's just a feeling of discharge," said a fire keeper named Edgar, who helps Martinez with the sacred ritual. For personal reasons, Edgar did not want to give his last name.

"You start feeling like you need it," Edgar said. "Definitely after a few months, you feel like, I need a lodge. I need to go and do a lodge."

Martinez adds: "With prayer, and with healing plants, there's a healing that goes on."

Trauma pervades Martinez's family history, as it does for many Native Americans. By the mid-20th century, many tribes and families were pushed onto reservations or into poor villages and were fighting for survival. Federal policies tried to push assimilation. Native American children were taken from their parents. Laws forbid the traditional way of life.

In the 1950s, a policy called "The Urban Relocation Program" encouraged native people to move to urban areas. Thousands of Native Americans moved to cities around the U.S., including Oakland and San Francisco.

Martinez has lived most of his life in Oakland. But not all of it. He has fond memories of the valley where he lived and played in Fort Garland, Colorado. That's where his family settled after a great-grandmother was separated from the Navajo Nation. In 1953, tempted by the relocation program, Martinez's family left Colorado, and boarded a bus headed for Oakland. Martinez was three years old.

"So they made their campaign of relocation sound pretty good," Martinez said. "If you assimilate and become more American and speak Americano and learn how to work Americano and live in Americano cities, you won't be cold no more and hungry."

Martinez is 64 now. He has a quick wit, the kind of person who looks for humor at every turn. But he still tears up when he talks about those early Oakland years. The family ended up in public housing, in an old Navy barracks near High Street.

He says it wasn't fit for adults, let alone children. Children would play with mercury and chew on tar dumped near the railroad tracks. Racism was as present as the light of day. In school, he felt hated for who he was.

"By nine years old, I was convinced that I had bad hair, bad blood, bad skin, bad roots," Martinez said.

At home, the family spoke Spanish, mixed with words preserved from native languages. Martinez didn't know English when he started kindergarten. The teachers would grab his ear and yell, "Speak English. You're in America."

"And when I'm being hurt and scared like that, I would cry out 'Ay, dios mio!' And they would pull harder and yell harder," he said.

"They convinced me something was wrong with my brain. I would come home and tell my mama, 'Algo me pasa mi cerebro, mamina.'" In English this means, "Mama, something is wrong with my brain."

His mother would wrap him in a blanket, massage his body and sing him medicine songs. She prepared healing herbs, the way her grandmothers taught her.

But the cruelty at school ripped into him on a daily basis. Home life was hard as well. His father, a World War II veteran, lashed out in drunken rages.

For many years he sought healing for these kinds of memories. The sweat lodge resonated with him and helped. Once he felt better, he wanted to make it available to others.

“These we call abuelas,” Martinez says as he points to rocks piled next to a large, outdoor fireplace in his East Oakland backyard. “Some people call them abuelos, grandparents,” A few feet behind us is the actual sweat lodge. In a few hours, he will lead a ceremony inside.

To prepare for the ritual, he turns toward the fireplace, raises one hand high, closes his eyes and speaks in Nahuatl, an indigenous language still spoken in some parts of Mexico. The Nahuatl name for sweat lodge is the Temazcal, which is what Martinez prefers to call it.

The Nahuatl pays homage to his ancestors who likely migrated north from what is now Mexico, hundreds of years ago. Martinez is also part Navajo. This is what connects him to the many Mexicans who come to his lodge trying to access indigenous roots diluted or lost after Spain’s invasion of the Americas.

True to his family’s history, there is a mixture of cultures in Martinez’s backyard. The Temezcal frame is made of arched willow boughs and covered by heavy blankets in the style of the Lakota, a tribe on the Great Plains. During ceremonies, Martinez speaks in Spanish, Nahuatl and English. He will also call on his education as a trauma counselor to emphasize healing and compassion.

When Martinez was nine years old, he had a near-death experience in the Bay. He says he saw a light. It calmed him, made him feel whole.

“I’m one of the human beings who died and came back a witness to that light,” Martinez said. “That light is beautiful.”

He wanted to find that light again. For the next 30 years, he searched, starting in the Catholic church. There, he says he found the light. But he felt unwelcome in a place that displayed images of a white God, a white Jesus, a white Mary, white angels. No one who looked like him.

As he grew older, Martinez’s identity began to take hold. He became a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War, and later a community activist who fought for human rights.

But he also turned to alcohol -- like his father. Martinez’ children begged him to stop. He always started again.

Finally, in 1989 a budding group that became the National Compadres Network invited him to a Latino men's council. That first council, he says, it was like a memory had been released from his DNA.

"And so DNA burst in my heart, the first time I made a circle with these men and they lit this fire and they put copal in the sacred essence and we made that four-corner prayer," Martinez said.

Later, the group started holding sweat lodges; Martinez realized staying connected to these ceremonies was about more than culture. It was about survival. For him, it allowed him to stay clean and sober. And he saw how it could help others. After several years of training, he asked permission to lead sweat lodges at his own home.

In parts of North America, the purifying tradition dates back many thousands of years. But today in Oakland, modern concessions must be made. One of the fire keepers calls the local fire department.

"Hi, I'd like to report a ceremonial burn," the fire keeper says.

"Ah. Gracias," Martinez says. "He's now calling in. They know us, too."

The fire keepers will take care of heating the rocks that will be brought inside of the lodge once the ceremony begins. Meanwhile, Martinez prepares Agua Florida, water with flower essences.

People who come to the sweat lodge will splash their bodies with the Agua Florida. Then, they purify with an aromatic smoke called copal.

"And the third thing that we offer them is to grab some cedar and to sort of start to place their heart an intention on what they'd like to work on inside the Temescal," explains another fire keeper who did not want her name used because of the intensely spiritual nature of the experience.

Today, only Martinez, fire keepers and a few others will enter.

But once a month, Martinez holds a community lodge. On those days, 40 or more people, including women, men, and young children may come. Those who come call him Tio Samuel, Uncle Samuel. In turn, he calls them "the relatives," no matter their ethnic identity. Participants bring food and offerings, but pay nothing.

The ceremony will last several hours. Participants will emerge, looking exhausted and drenched with sweat. Sweat that may have brought memories to the surface.

But also, a release.

“We have no mountain. We have no reservation. We have no valley. We have no rivers. How do you keep a people together like that, the national identity and pride, with no land?” Martinez asks. “And you’re trying to survive, dominated by a society that hates everything about you.”

He says he’s only glad that he could quit drinking so he could be a witness to the cultural pride and resurrection that is taking place.

“Since then I’ve been standing on a mountain, crying out, we survived. It wasn’t destroyed. It wasn’t burned. It survived. Intact. What was is.”

It took many years for Martinez to find a place of faith where he belonged, a place where he could see the light that he experienced as a kid.

Inside the darkness of the lodge, he sees it.

This story is part of a new series called The Spiritual Edge on KALW. Go to thespiritualedge.org to hear more stories, or to leave us a comment on what we should be covering.

Direct Link: <http://kalw.org/post/native-american-sweats-out-trauma-past-0#stream/0>

Not Guilty: Man Accused of Hurling Beer, Racial Slurs at Native American Kids Acquitted

[Simon Moya-Smith](#)

9/1/15

A man who was accused of pouring beer on a group of Native American kids and telling them to “go back to the reservation” in January has been acquitted of disorderly conduct, according to reports.

Trace O’Connell, 41, of Philip, South Dakota, was charged with violating Rapid City’s municipal disorderly conduct ordinance, the Rapid City Journal [reported](#), but on Tuesday Magistrate Judge Eric Strawn found O’Connell not guilty.



Trace O’Connell. Photo courtesy Rapid City Journal.

Even if O'Connell had been found guilty he would not have faced any time behind bars. Strawn [removed](#) the possibility of jail in May.

On January 24, a group of 57 students, ages 9 to 13, from the American Horse K-8 school in Allen were sitting below a VIP suite during a Rapid City Rush Hockey Game at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center when an estimated 15 people in the suite, including O'Connell, began shouting racial slurs at the kids and proceeded to dump beer on them, witness and chaperone Justin Poor Bear said.

Poor Bear later wrote on his Facebook wall that the students were told to "go back to the reservation." He told ABC News affiliate KOTA that he confronted the aggressors and they goaded him to enter the VIP section to "fight about it."

Parents said for some of the kids it was their first experience going to a hockey game.

On Tuesday, Rapid City Attorney Joel Landeen issued a statement saying he is soured by Magistrate Strawn's ruling.

"Obviously, we are disappointed in the decision. We felt all along the city had a strong case with enough evidence to move forward for conviction. The disorderly conduct charge was the strongest charge the city could bring. We worked with the facts we had and it was a challenging case to administer, with a variety of recollections and perceptions to share from numerous witnesses," he wrote in a statement, according to the Rapid City Journal.

The incident in January set off a wave of protests and marches geared to raise awareness toward what activists in South Dakota say is a blatant culture of racism against Native Americans throughout the state. Following the incident at the civic center as well as the shooting and killing of Allen Locke, a Native American, by police, MTV World documented the watershed between the Native and non-Native communities in Rapid City for its "[Rebel Music](#)" series.

Cody Hall, Cheyenne River Minnicoujou, who was featured in the series, told *ICTMN* on Tuesday that the Native community in South Dakota "knew the verdict would be 'not guilty.'"

"The judge waited nearly five weeks to release this verdict. The judge set a precedent that the value and lives of our Lakota children are minimal in the eyes of the city of Rapid City and the state of South Dakota. The Governor, the Attorney General of South Dakota, the Mayor of Rapid City and the Rapid City Police Chief do not value the life of the Lakota people. We here at NativeLivesMatter will continue to be positive but truthful for the lives of our kids and people. We will still seek justice."

Less than two weeks after the racially charged incident with the American Horse students, a Native American woman who was at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center attending a rodeo was struck from behind after someone allegedly threw a beer at her.

The state's decision regarding O'Connell is final and cannot be appealed, according to the Rapid City Journal.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/09/01/not-guilty-man-accused-hurling-beer-racial-slurs-native-american-kids-acquitted-161584>

Spreading the word: Obamacare is for Native Americans, too

[Politics](#) [Anna Gorman](#) · Kaiser Health News · Sep 2, 2015

As a member of the Navajo tribe, Rochelle Jake has received free care through the Indian Health Service her entire life. The IHS clinics took care of her asthma, allergies and eczema — chronic problems, nothing urgent.

Recently, though, she felt sharp pains in her side. Her doctor recommended an MRI and other tests she couldn't get through IHS. To pay for them, he urged her to sign up for private insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

"I couldn't wrap my head around it," says Jake, 45, sitting on the porch swing of her home in Albuquerque. She didn't think Obamacare applied to her.

"I thought [IHS] should be responsible for my health care because I am Native American."

But Jake did sign up for a plan and now can start making doctors' appointments.

Tribes, health care advocates and government officials across the nation are working to enroll as many Native Americans as possible in [Obamacare](#), saying it offers new choices to patients and financial relief for struggling Indian hospitals and clinics.

Native Americans can get an exemption from the requirement that everybody have health insurance. Under the health law, however, many Native Americans can get coverage under Medicaid, which serves low-income Americans, or buy subsidized plans through insurance exchanges. That allows them to receive treatment from private doctors and hospitals rather than rely solely on government and tribal facilities.

And the coverage allows Indian health facilities, which tribal leaders say are chronically underfunded, to bill insurers for care they already provide. And that additional revenue means doctors and hospitals can also offer new services.

Advocates also see the health law as a chance to reduce the health disparities that have long afflicted Native Americans, including rates of diabetes that are three times higher than the U.S. population and a life span that is four years shorter.

"The Affordable Care Act is starting to fill the gap between need and current resources," says Doneg McDonough, a consultant to tribes on implementation of the health law. "And it is a huge gap that has to be filled in."

The [Indian Health Service](#) provides care to about 2.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in 35 states. But the federal agency, with a fixed budget of \$4.6 billion, can't afford to provide comprehensive services at all its far-flung facilities.

"I don't know if you guys have all heard of this saying, 'Don't get sick after June because IHS runs out of funding in June?' " enrollment worker Shaina Ramone tells a crowd at a Navajo agricultural business near Farmington, N.M. "So don't get sick in July or August."

Enrollment workers have an uphill battle, however, because many Native Americans are unfamiliar with the law and insurance or mistrust the government.

"We are just now starting to scratch the surface," said Sonny Weakhee, outreach coordinator for [Native American Professional Parent Resources](#), which has a contract with New Mexico to do outreach and enrollment among Native communities. "Insurance has always been available to other people, but it is brand new for us."

Weakhee wears his hair in a long ponytail and greets friends with a hug. His job is to travel across the state to talk to Native Americans about Obamacare. His organization persuaded Jake, despite her initial reluctance, to enroll in a plan through New Mexico's exchange that costs her about \$37 a month.

Native Americans in federally recognized tribes can sign up year-round. Weakhee, who is part Navajo and part Pueblo, meets one on one with potential enrollees where they work and live, answering questions and promoting the benefits of insurance.

At a traditional tribal feast in Santo Domingo, a small pueblo about 45 minutes from Albuquerque, Weakhee stands in front of a shaded table, handing out brochures and fans with the logo of the New Mexico exchange.

The next day, he travels to the hilltop Navajo reservation in [Shiprock](#), where he talks to customers at busy grocery store and a small restaurant where a handwritten menu features mutton stew, [Navajo burger](#) and fry bread. Weakhee also likes to visit laundromats, where people have time to spare.

Helping Hospitals Too

No reliable estimates exist on the total number of Native Americans who have enrolled in Obamacare. But tribal officials say Indian health facilities and contractors are already

reaping the benefits. In fiscal year 2014, the Indian Health Service collected \$49 million more in revenue because of patients newly insured through the Affordable Care Act, according to the agency.

In New Mexico, Leonard Thomas, acting IHS director for the Albuquerque region, says the money is helping modernize aging facilities and add medical staff. Thomas says the IHS can now pay for more services, such as diagnostic tests and orthopedic care from outside facilities.

Brian Garretson, director of patient financial services for the [San Juan Regional Medical Center](#), a nonprofit community hospital in Farmington, is more than willing to lend space to outreach workers to sign up new enrollees. His hospital contracts with IHS to provide care to Native Americans, but Garretson says the hospital can't always recoup the cost from the agency.

"There are times when we get to the end of their fiscal year, and they have already gone through all their money so we aren't going to get paid," he says.

At the Zuni Comprehensive Health Center on a reservation west of Albuquerque, CEO Jean Othole says she's enthusiastic about the future. With added revenue, she plans to expand the number of exam rooms throughout the hospital.

Still, Othole says the hospital struggles to recruit doctors, and patients have to leave for surgeries and most emergency and specialty care. That includes women who need C-sections or who face high-risk births.

The health law so far is having an uneven impact on Native Americans and health centers that serve them.

Not all states chose to expand Medicaid. And because of the way the law defines Native American, only certain tribal members are entitled to special benefits such as a restriction on out-of-pocket costs like copays and deductibles.

Some people are more receptive to health insurance than others.

Galen Martinez, a teacher who lives on the Acoma pueblo west of Albuquerque, doesn't plan to sign up. As he cooks chicken wings at a tribal ceremony in Gallup, Martinez says the U.S. government should provide comprehensive, free health care to Native Americans, as promised. Insurance doesn't solve the problem, he says, because even if you have it, getting from remote reservations to cities for care is burdensome.

Weakhee and his team say that is part of their challenge. Along with signing Native Americans up for insurance, they also must also teach them how to use it.

They recently helped enroll 59-year-old Margaret Thompson in an exchange plan. It was the first time the Navajo woman had been insured. Sitting at an outreach office in

Farmington, Thompson says now she's nervous about seeking out private doctors to treat her arthritis and diabetes. She's used to the Indian Health Service.

"I don't know where to begin," she says.

Direct Link: <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/09/03/npr-obamacare-native-americans>

Rand Paul Thinks 'Lack Of Assimilation' Is Native Americans' Problem

"If they were assimilated, within a decade they'd probably be doing as well as the rest of us."

[Julian Brave NoiseCat](#) Native Issues Fellow, The Huffington Post
Posted: 09/03/2015 04:39 PM EDT



GOP presidential candidate Rand Paul took to the airwaves Thursday to broadcast his theory that Native Americans "don't do very well because of their lack of assimilation."

The Kentucky senator's comment followed an exchange with conservative talk show host Laura Ingraham about what she called "separatist" immigrant communities. Ingraham was incredulous that "the MSNBC crowd" supported Jeb Bush's penchant for speaking Spanish at campaign events.

Asked whether he thought speaking Spanish was appropriate, Paul veered off to talk about the only people who never immigrated to this country: Native Americans.

"I think assimilation is an amazing thing," Paul said. "A good example of how, even in our country, assimilation didn't happen -- and it has been a disaster for the people -- has been the Native American population on the reservations. If they were assimilated, within a decade they'd probably be doing as well as the rest of us. But instead, seclusion and isolating them -- we took their land, and then we put them all on small quadrants of land."

Ingraham did not point out Paul's historical revisionism, but Democrats and Native leaders did.

The Democratic National Committee said in a press release that Paul revealed a "shocking lack of historical and cultural awareness" about Native people.

This history includes warfare, forced removal, broken treaties and unkept promises, as well as the more recent, but often forgotten, record of abuse and cultural genocide suffered by Native American children through the [boarding school](#) system of the 19th and 20th centuries. That assimilation policy was designed to "[kill the Indian and save the man](#)."

"Sen. Paul's statements harken back to a disastrous era of federal policies that aimed to terminate tribal governments and eradicate Native American cultures," said PaaWee Rivera, a Pueblo of Pojoaque tribal member and the DNC's director of Native American engagement, in the press release.

Paul's proposed 2013 budget for the federal government would have cut Indian Health Services by more than [20 percent](#). The senator also voted [against](#) reauthorization of the [Violence Against Women Act](#), which would have given tribes the power to prosecute nontribal members for violence and abuse committed against Native women on tribal lands. His proposed 2015 budget goes so far as to [eliminate the Bureau of Indian Affairs](#), the federal agency responsible for providing services to 566 federally recognized tribes across the United States.

Earlier this week, President Barack Obama announced that he was formally restoring the Native name of [Denali](#) to the tallest mountain in North America. Official recognition of the Athabascan name was one of the most significant symbolic gestures toward the first peoples in the U.S. in recent memory.

"[T]his last week was a good demonstration of a recognition of First peoples -- the rightful restoring of the traditional name of Denali," said Jacqueline Pata, executive director of the National Congress of American Indians, an indigenous rights organization.

"Assimilation implies erasing one's identity and culture -- that is not what the America I know stands for," Pata said in her statement. "America's strength comes from its diversity. Native Americans' strength comes from our connection to place and culture."

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/rand-paul-assimilation-native-americans_55e8986fe4b0b7a9633c4edc

The Subtle Evolution of Native American Education

Compared to their peers, “American Indian” and “Alaska Native” students aren’t seeing the same growth in enrollment or attainment.



Middle schoolers in a culture class at the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation in Florida Luis M. Alvarez / AP

[Alia Wong](#)

Sep 1, 2015

Just as the feds have long [predicted](#), the [50 million-plus students](#) enrolled in the country’s public K-12 schools this fall are more racially diverse than ever. Students of color now outnumber their white peers, largely thanks to striking growth in America’s Latino and Asian youth populations. Times sure [have changed](#): Fewer than one in five Americans ages 85 or older was a minority in 2013, versus half of children under 5.

Taken as a whole, these statistics suggest that it may be time to revisit the word “minorities” when talking about students who aren’t white. Then again, the statistics probably shouldn’t be taken as a whole.

A close analysis of the U.S. Department of Education’s actual and projected demographic data suggests that the trends for students identified as “American Indian” or “Alaska Native” tend to deviate from the overall student body. These discrepancies are often so subtle that they seem negligible; the data is so tenuous that the subject seems moot. But these nuances are important to highlight—if only because America’s indigenous children are so often left out of conversations about closing the “achievement gap.”

Indigenous children in America sometimes attend separate schools whose pedagogy and curricula are tailored to indigenous worldviews and learning needs. These institutions can be [charter schools](#), [language-immersion schools](#), Indian-reservation schools, or even private schools. (In my home state of Hawaii, Kamehameha Schools—a private institution whose endowment is valued at a whopping [\\$11 billion](#)—generally restricts

admission to students of Native Hawaiian descent, a policy that's been challenged in federal court a number of times [to little avail](#).) The idea is that emphasizing "Native Ways of Knowing"—on top of the earmarked funding and regulatory waivers designed to offset legacies of institutionalized discrimination—will help improve their outcomes.

Yet these programs don't always achieve their mission. As *Education Week* [reported](#) in a recent analysis, schools run by the beleaguered Bureau of Indian Education—which serves just 5 percent of the country's Native American children—are often dilapidated and unsafe, plagued by unstable governance and tangled bureaucracy. And within the regular school system, Native American students' performance still lags far behind that of their peers.

First, a look at the numbers. Although the public-school population at large [is expected to have grown by 12 percent](#) between 2000 and 2024, the sizes of some subgroups are projected to shrink. Namely, the share of total enrollment of students identified as white or Native American alone will experience the most significant declines: by 17 percent and 11 percent, respectively, according to the DOE projections. (Prior to 2008, the DOE didn't collect data on students of two or more races separately, so the statistics don't offer perfect reflections of the student population; nearly one in six of today's marriages [is interracial](#).)

Similar trends can be seen with high-school graduation data. Whereas the percentage of high-school graduates identified as Hispanic or Asian/Pacific Islander is slated to gradually increase, that of those who are white, black, or American Indian/Alaska Native is expected to do the opposite. And, for the most part, the same goes for college-enrollment trends, though it's clear that racial imbalances still influence higher-education attainment—particularly with regard to Latino students:

Here's how the numbers of Native Americans enrolled in public K-12 schools, graduating from high school, and attending postsecondary institutions are expected to change through 2024:

At face value, these Native American trends may not be very alarming; statistically speaking, their educational status and outcomes have remained stable, and given the small population size, it's hard to draw conclusions based on the data. Moreover, the statistics themselves should be taken with a good amount of skepticism given the way the DOE (and the census bureau) have tended to collect demographic data: It's likely that these statistics don't capture the realities of all the public-school students in the country who have Native American ancestry. After all, as the Northern Arizona University professor [Jon Allan Reyhner](#), an expert on indigenous-education issues, pointed out, data suggests that Native American families have actually been [seeing higher-than-average birth rates](#). The census bureau has found that the American Indian population is growing at twice the rate of the general population.

But perhaps these incongruities are precisely why these student trends are important to highlight. Reyhner suggested that the DOE data, which is self-reported, shows how

“changes in attitudes for claiming Native descent can change over time.” In particular, Reyhner suspects that the Native American student demographic data may be underreported, in part because of negative stereotypes about those who identify as indigenous—including perceptions arguably advanced in history classes. “How American Indians are portrayed in K-12 textbooks certainly has some impact [on] how they feel about their Native identity,” Reyhner said. In theory, these mindsets could compel someone whose mother is Navajo and whose father is white to check off the latter box and thus be considered white on paper.

Reyhner also suggested some families may want to distinguish themselves from the poor educational outcomes associated with indigenous populations. Indeed, Native American students underperform on all kinds of education metrics—even despite the range of educational programs that have been developed to target their needs. Even despite a [2004 executive order](#) calling for closer examination of the educational experiences and progress of American Indian/Alaska Native students.

As the National Education Association [noted](#) in a 2010 report, American Indian and Alaska Native students have some of the highest dropout rates in the country. Their poor academic performance in math and reading—even when compared other traditionally disadvantaged minorities—may help explain the negative perceptions about Native Americans’ educational outcomes, as does their relatively low early-childhood literacy levels. They’re also more likely than any other racial group to be placed in special-education classes, and their discipline rates are second only to black students.

In a recent essay for *The Aspen Journal of Ideas*, Cheryl Crazy Bull, the president and CEO of the American Indian College Fund, cited the impact of 19th- and 20th-century [school policies](#) on Native Americans’ educational outcomes. The policies required that American Indian youth attend boarding schools as a means of assimilating them to anglocentric norms. “Instead of building cultural and social capacity or teaching Native students to adapt in culturally responsive ways, the American education system was designed to suppress tribal identities,” Crazy Bull [wrote](#), pointing to the high rates of health problems, teen pregnancy, suicide, and incarceration that plague today’s young Native American adults.

It’s important to remember that not all students are advancing through the educational pipeline at the same pace.

Now, Barack and Michelle Obama are advocating for better support for American Indian youth, both within and outside the school system. In fact, they recently launched an initiative called Generation Indigenous, aimed at bringing more resources to these children and their families. “Folks in Indian Country didn’t just wake up one day with addiction problems. Poverty and violence didn’t just randomly happen to this community,” Michelle Obama said earlier this year. “These issues are the result of a long history of systematic discrimination and abuse.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/09/native-american-education/402787/>

Tensions mount over death of Brazil indigenous leader

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Leaders of several indigenous groups protest with a coffin against the murder of the leader of the Guarani-Kaiowa ethnic group, Semiao Vilhalva, in Brasilia on September 1, 2015 (AFP Photo/Evaristo Sa)

Brasília (AFP) - Tensions over land ownership are soaring between Brazil's indigenous Guarani people and ranchers after the shooting of a Guarani leader, activists said Wednesday.

In Antonio Joao, in Mato Grosso do Sul state, "the situation is very tense," said Cleber Buzatto, with the Indigenous Missionary Council, a Catholic Church group defending indigenous communities' rights.

On August 22, about 1,000 members of the Guarani-Kaiowa community invaded lands they say have been stolen by farmers. A week later, the council said, dozens of ranchers struck back, pushing the minority ethnic group out and shooting dead one of their leaders, Semiao Vilhalva, 24.

"It's a region with a history of violence by ranchers against the Guarani-Kaiowa and Semiao was one more victim," Buzatto said.

State authorities asked for federal troops to be sent to restore order in a 30-day operation. This Wednesday, Justice Minister Jose Cardozo and two federal deputies traveled to Mato Grosso do Sul to meet with local leaders.

Indigenous people in the region have struggled to hold on to ancestral lands. In 2005, the Supreme Court suspended an earlier government judgement declaring the area where the latest violence took place to belong to the Guarani.

There are some 890,000 indigenous people in Brazil, which has a total population of about 202 million. Their lands occupy 12 percent of the country's territory, largely in the Amazon interior.

Many of the indigenous groups are under pressure from agriculture and foresting groups pushing into areas where they live.

According to the Indigenous Missionary Council, there were 138 murders of indigenous people in 2014, a 42 percent rise over the previous year.

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